



A night for charities in Porthcawl.
(See pages 3 and 8)

Bridgend & Porthcawl GEM



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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 2012

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School's musical highlights depth of local talent

Photograph by
MALCOLM NUGENT



Porthcawl RNLI lead the lifesaving league table!

REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

LIFEBOATS across south Wales have contributed to a record year for the RNLI, with volunteers spending more time responding to emergencies in 2011 than ever before – and the Porthcawl team is heading the league table for time spent at sea!

The charity has released statistics showing that lifeboat crew across Wales spent 6,877 hours answering calls for help, with Porthcawl spending more time at sea than any other station of the 31 in Wales.

Porthcawl RNLI's press spokesman Ian Stroud joked that this was because "the lads have trouble finding their way back!"

On a more serious note, he said that the figures reflected the importance the Porthcawl station places on training.

An RNLI spokeswoman said that the record-breaking figure was a measure of the dedication of the 600 volunteers in Wales, who spent an additional 19,196 hours at sea training, taking the total number of hours on the water to 26,073. The RNLI figures show that at Porthcawl, volun-

teers spent 1,913 hours at sea, while the number of people rescued rocketed by 63 per cent.

Porthcawl's Atlantic 85 lifeboat was the second busiest inshore lifeboat in Wales, with 56 launches. Its crew also experienced more action in the darkness than any other Welsh lifeboat station, with 23 callouts during the night.

While Beaumaris reported the greatest number of lifeboat launches in 2011, it was the volunteer crew at The Mumbles who rescued more people than anywhere else in Wales.

The crew at the Swansea station rescued 89 people – a slight decrease on a particularly busy 2010. The inshore and all-weather lifeboats at The Mumbles launched 65 times during the year.

Machinery failure remains the number one cause of service for RNLI lifeboats in the West Division, (Wales and the Isle of Man) with 201 incidents in 2011, slightly down on the 270 incidents in 2010.

This is followed by launches to vessels thought to be in trouble, with 114 incidents. Most launches were to powered pleasure craft (267), people in the water (206) and manual pleasure craft (187).

Colin Williams, RNLI divisional inspector of Lifeboats for Wales, said: "Nearly half the stations in Wales saw the number of launches rise in 2011, as more and more people take to the sea for leisure and recreation."

"The time spent responding to emergencies is just a drop in the ocean, when we consider the additional 19,196 hours they spent training during 2011. Clocking up a total of 26,073 hours in 2011 is certainly a measure of their commitment."

"I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to all those who support the RNLI, by volunteering their time or by making a donation – our charity receives less than two per cent of its income from government sources, so we absolutely depend on the support of the

public."

Last month, the RNLI in Wales launched a campaign to raise £185,500 to fund new lifejackets for its volunteer crews.

People have already been giving generously, but there is still some way to go to purchase this vital piece of kit to ensure crew can do their jobs in the safest possible way.

Deborah Ferns, RNLI community fundraising manager says: "A lot of time has been put into the design of the new lifejackets, which meet the charity's current search and rescue requirements and they have been heavily praised by volunteers from Holyhead and Criccieth who were involved in the trials."

"Offers of funding have already been gratefully received, but we still need more support to ensure all our 600-plus volunteers in Wales are handed this vital new piece of kit this Spring."

Anyone able to help fund the new lifejackets should telephone Deborah Ferns, RNLI community fundraising manager on 07900 607213.

Brass band contest stays in town

A GRANT of £4,000 from Porthcawl

Town Council has meant that the Welsh Open Brass Band Championship will be back again in the town this month – on February 18.

Previously known as the South Wales Miners' Eisteddfod, the event has been running since 1948 – always at the Grand Pavilion...

Roger Price, who has organised the competition for more than 35 years, told The GEM that he was delighted that the town council had continued to support it.

He said that 11 bands had entered for the event, and that the quality this year was high.

For many years, the competition was supported by Bridgend County Borough Council, but that ceased a few years ago.

Roger Price was adamant that, without the support of Porthcawl Town Council, the event could not have gone ahead.

Whatever happens next year, 2013 will definitely be a watershed year, because Mr Price is stepping down, and is insisting that this year will be his last as organiser.

ABOVE:
Pupils from the performing arts department at Porthcawl Comprehensive School tackled a challenging musical last week – the Broadway show, *Fiddler on the Roof*, over four nights in the Grand Pavilion. For a review of the show, and for more photographs, please turn to pages 4 and 5.

Beth Harry is delighted to announce the launch of her fabulous new unisex salon...

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£4.2 million to be spent on 'the Rec'

THE new partnership between BCBC and social enterprises Halo and Greenwich Leisure Limited will bring a £4.2 million investment at Bridgend Recreation Centre.

The scheme will provide new health and fitness areas, studio spaces and a project to overhaul and rejuvenate the dry-side facilities – which date back to 1974. A BCBC spokeswoman said: "Underpinning the proposed development will be measures to ensure that the building becomes more sustainable and that space is used more efficiently. (See next week's GEM for more on this.)

POLICE APPEAL FOR WITNESSES TO CRASH

POLICE are appealing for information, following a serious road traffic collision at a mini roundabout at Evans Street, Kenfig Hill on Friday, Feb 3.

A 30-year-old local male who was riding a scrambler type motorcycle, suffered serious head injuries and was flown by air ambulance to the University

Hospital of Wales, where he is currently receiving treatment.

A police spokesperson said: "Witnesses are sought to the collision and to the movements beforehand of the motorcycle and a white Ford Transit tipper van, which was travelling in front of it. They are asked to contact the Roads Policing Unit on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."

Move to quash rumours as NHS Trust insists....

Hospital to stay open at Maesteg

– But mental health beds will be moved to a ‘state of the art facility in Bridgend’

THE local NHS trust has moved to quash any rumours that Maesteg hospital may be closing.

A statement said that Maesteg Hospital will continue to play an important role in delivering health care, following the outcome of a wide-ranging public engagement process over the future of mental health services within Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board.

The statement, from the health board, continued: “However, its mental health beds will transfer to a state-of-the-art facility in Bridgend, which was built specifically for mental health patients.

“At the board’s meeting last week, it was agreed that the mental health beds in one ward at Maesteg Hospital would transfer to the new 42-bed purpose-built Angelton Clinic at Glanrhed Hospital in Bridgend.

“This decision has the support of the ABM Community Health Council.

“The Angelton Clinic, which opened just over a year ago, offers rooms which are private and ensuite, and facilities for disabled patients.

“A ‘wander loop’ circular corridor also provides patients with a safe route to walk, and rooms are

all colour-coded with pictorial signs to make them easy for patients to recognise.”

Patients currently in the mental health beds in Maesteg Hospital will either transfer to the beds in Angelton Clinic, or into other community beds, e.g. nursing home beds, if that is more appropriate for their care.

The statement continued: “The board agreed that the former mental health beds at Maesteg Hospital will be used instead for other patients.

“A multi-agency planning group is now being set up to decide how to make the best use of these beds.

“As part of this decision-making process, the Health Board will be engaging with local people, clinicians and staff to gain their views on health services in Maesteg.

“In the meantime, Lynfi ward will continue to provide services to older people who need rehabilitation within a hospital setting.”

The public engagement over ABMU’s five year plan for mental health services, which included plans to move the mental health beds from Maesteg Hospital to the Angelton Clinic, took place between September 8 and December 9, 2011.

European delegates thank Bridgend for housing seminar

DELEGATES from across Europe have thanked Bridgend County Borough Council for a seminar aimed at sharing ideas to improve social housing.

The grant-funded event ran for three days in Bridgend and looked at how to make social housing more sustainable and efficient while encouraging greater citizen engagement.

It was part of the Urbact II CASH scheme (Cities Action For Sustainable Housing) which is looking at ways of tackling fuel poverty, creating more sustainable, affordable housing and reducing CO2 emissions and energy consumption.

European visitors had the opportunity to speak with local residents who have been involved in home energy efficiency improvements and to

develop new methods for involving people in planning for the future.

Coun Phil White, BCBC cabinet member for communities, said: “We were pleased to receive such positive feedback from the delegates who told us they had learned a lot from the good work here in Bridgend.

“We are pleased to have a chance to share our ideas and good practice and build strong and positive relationships with partners.”

First Minister and Bridgend AM Carwyn Jones who also attended the launch; added:

“This conference was very timely as the Welsh Government is looking at bringing forward a Sustainable Development Bill.

“I’m extremely pleased that such a prestigious European project chose Bridgend as a partner and that we could extend such a warm welcome to visitors from across Europe.”

LOCAL PUPILS SPEAK OUT...



THE Rotary club of Maesteg held its ‘Youth Speaks’ competition on Monday, January 30, at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd.

It was an excellent competition and the pupils had obviously researched the topics that they were given to speak about.

The winners will now go forward to the zone final at Maesteg Comprehensive school on February 9.

The Rotary Club would like to thank the school for its hospitality and for allowing the pupils to take part in the competition.

Special thanks must go to Rotarian Norman Boyle for his hard work in

organising the competition.

The picture above shows the pupils who took part, together with Rotary president Talfyn Harries, Rotarians Norman Boyle and Robert Davies and Mrs Barbara Boyle, who kindly agreed to be a judge for the evening. TH

Porthcawl Rotarians donate to charity

ONCE again, the Rotary Club of Porthcawl has recently made a generous donation to a local charity.

Ty Cornel, in Porthcawl, is the secretary of Llamaus’ SAFE projects (Supported housing, Advice, Family mediation, Empowerment) – a short-term assessment and supported housing project for homeless 16 and 17 year olds. It is a partnership between Llamaus, Hafod Care and Bridgend County Borough Council.

Llamaus is a charity based in south Wales,



Rotarians Colin Williams and Jean Schofield present the gifts to Caz Davies of Ty Cornel.

ultimate aim is to support the people who use their services in making these positive steps.

Pictured here are Rotarians Colin Williams, chairman of the club’s community and vocational committee member Jean Schofield with Caz Davies, lead worker at

Porthcawl’s ex-player will deliver Olympic news

A FORMER Porthcawl Town AFC player has been selected to be part of a five-strong GB news service team for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Mark Pickering, 26, from Pencoed, Bridgend, is the media officer for the British Judo Association, the national governing body for the Olympic sport of judo in Great Britain, and is based at the British Judo head office in Loughborough, Leicestershire.

The former FAW development squad member will link up with the British Olympic Association’s communications team from July for a four-

week secondment and will produce press releases on Team GB athletes as well as social media updates and flash quotes for the world press.

The Welshman, who holds a BA Hons Sports Journalism degree from Staffordshire University, relocated from south Wales to Loughborough, to join the British Judo Association in 2010.

Mark said: “I’m delighted to be selected to be part of a home Olympics.”

“It’s a great privilege and undoubtedly the highlight of my career.”

To find your nearest judo club visit britishjudo.org.uk

Bridgend bridge club results

RESULTS at the Bridgend Bridge Club on Wednesday February 1, were as follows:

First, Liam Sheridan and Andrew Scott; second, Colin and Hazel Heard; third, Mary Moore and Di Jones.

Friday February 3: First, Marjorie Morris and Adrian Thomas; second, Mary Moore and Tony Disley; third, Emer Disley and Wendy Williams.

In addition to the regular club nights on Wednesday and Friday evenings at 7pm in Nolton Church Hall, there will be lessons for beginners on Fridays at 7.30pm and improvers on Wednesdays at 2.30pm – all welcome.

For more information or to register interest, please contact one of the following: John Beard (01446 771445), Steve Burgoyne (01656 661968) or David Newman (01656 649138).

New Rural Dean of Margam



THE Rev Canon Philip Masson, Rector for the Parish of Porthcawl and Newton Nottage, has been appointed the Rural Dean of Margam.

HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL FEBRUARY 16)

The high tides listed in this week’s GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary.

For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
09 Thur	07.17	10.1	19.39	10.0
10 Fri	07.57	10.3	20.21	10.2
11 Sat	08.37	10.3	21.01	9.9
12 Sun	09.16	9.9	21.39	9.7
13 Mon	09.58	9.5	22.22	9.2
14 Tues	10.44	9.1	23.11	8.6
15 Wed	11.41	8.4		
16 Thur	00.17	8.0	12.5	7.9

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should always check with a tide table specific to their location.

PORTHCAWL CHARITIES JOIN FORCES AT HI-TIDE PRESENTATION EVENING

PHOTOGRAPHS by KEITH E MORGAN

P O R T H C A W L Air Ambulance. Christmas Morning Swim and the Portcawl Buccaneers held their inaugural joint presentation – formally handing over almost £11,000 to the local organisations chosen to benefit by each committee.

The swim committee treasurer, Marilyn Richards, said: "Besides the cheques we have donated this evening, we are also aware of several thousand pounds that other organisations will benefit from, as a result of a very successful 'Swim'."

During the evening on February 3, Porthcawl Carnival's Kerry Marlow presented cheques to Sandville, Porthcawl Counselling Service, Bro Morgannwg Baby Loss Support, Porthcawl Athletic, Fire Fighters Charity, Porthcawl Coastguard Unit,

National Deaf Children's Society, HCPT Group 55, and a charity chosen by Porthcawl Ukelele Band. The largest donation – a cheque for £3,680 – was made to the Swim's main beneficiary, Wales

Also receiving cheques from the chairman of the swim committee, Nicola Willis, were the following local organisations, Porthcawl and Pyle Pumas Amateur Boxing Club (£800), Porthcawl Stroke Club (£550), Ogwr & District Talking Newspaper Association (£250), Porthcawl Mayor's Civic Fund (£200), Trinity Care Club (£300), Porthcawl Athletic Club (£350), Newton Lifeguard Club (£200), Porthcawl YMCA (£250), Porthcawl Parkinson's Support Group (£350), Sker and Pink Bay Lifeguard Club (£200), Porthcawl Kidney Research (£250) and Rest Bay Lifeguard Club (£250)."

Nicola Willis said: "As an organising committee, we were delighted in the way we have been supported again this year. We would like to thank all swimmers, spectators, individuals, businesses and organisations who help us in so many ways to make the swim such a successful event in Porthcawl's calendar."

"During the months leading up to this year's event we decided to with Porthcawl Buccaneers. From our perspective this has been a positive move and we look forward to drawing on each other's strengths to support both Porthcawl's Carnival and the Swim".

Commenting on the evening, the Buccaneers' Martin Owen said: "There was tremendous goodwill demonstrated at the presentation and, while we and the swim committee consider we work hard to put on our respective event, many of our guests, representing local organisations, spend many hours for the benefit of our community and we were pleased to offer them financial help."

(See more photographs on page 8).



David Parry and Jean Schofield from Kidney Research



Aubrey Lewis from the boxing club.



John Berry and Mike Clarke from the YMCA.



ABOVE: Dani Robinson from the Wales Air Ambulance collects a cheque for £3,680.



David Philpott from talking newspapers.



Coun Alana Davies presents a cheque to Porthcawl Coastguard (above) and to Porthcawl St John Ambulance (below).



Louise and Georgie from Newton Lifeguards.



ABOVE:
The Trinity Care Club receive their cheque.

(See more photographs on page 8).



John Abrahams from Porthcawl RNLI.

Pat Farrow from Porthcawl Athletic.

Janet Skiffen from Parkinsons.

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The deputy mayor with Jeff Toombes and Dave King of the Fire Service.



Ian Ellison from Porthcawl Lifeguards.

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Deputy Mayor wishes cast good luck!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEITH E MORGAN

THE Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof* was performed by Porthcawl Comprehensive School at the Grand Pavilion over four nights (February 1-4), and there were good attendances at all four performances.

The final performance, on Saturday, was attended by Coun Alana Davies, the deputy Mayor of Porthcawl, who was standing in for the Mayor, Coun Barbara Stubbs, who is recovering

from injuries sustained in a car crash. Coun Davies was welcomed to the Grand Pavilion by representatives of Porthcawl Comprehensive School, Anne O'Brien (deputy headteacher), Jane Sloggett (assistant headteacher), and Andrew Slade (deputy headteacher).

In the company of Mr Kenny Dykes, the school's headteacher, she met the show's director, Kelly Hardwick and Joe Smith (production manager), and members of the cast before the performance.

RIGHT:
The deputy mayor with members of the cast and also Joe Smith (left), Kenny Dykes (second left) and Kelly Hardwick (third left).

LEFT:
We know it's an old joke but it is nice to see pupils who look up to their head-teacher!



ABOVE: Coun Alana Davies was welcomed to the Grand Pavilion by Anne O'Brien and Jane Sloggett.

Quiz night for Simon

A CHARITY quiz held at Cowbridge Rugby Club attracted 23 teams and raised more than £2,000 for Ty Hafan children's hospice.

The event was organised by Llanblethian journalist Simon Farrington, aged 54, as part of his London marathon fund-raising appeal, and around 115 friends and colleagues took part in the quiz and supported a charity raffle.

Simon will be running his first marathon on April 22 and he hopes to push his fund-raising

total past the £3,000 mark. "I'm indebted to the support of co-organisers Nigel and Claire Matthews and for the support of everybody who attended the event.

"Without the generosity of local companies, I could not have staged such a big event. In particular I must thank Barclays Bank for match funding, and Fine Wines Direct, The WRU, Wales Millennium Centre, Chepstow racecourse, The Bush at St Hilary, Xantippe, Pebbles boutique, the Bay Tree, Olive & Oils, and Ten Feet Tall Bar for donating such fantastic raffle and quiz prizes.

Anybody wishing to sponsor him and support Ty Hafan can give him a call on 01446 775678 or visit www.justgiving.com/Simon-Farrington.

WHO WANTS TO BUILD WHAT AND WHERE?

Mr Robert Hathaway – Evangelist Church, Free School Court, Bridgend – Three aluminium signs to replace existing signs and one new protruding sign.
Mr Lyn Jones – 8 Raphael Avenue, Brackla – Canopy reduce oak tree to rear.
Mr John Llewellyn – 6 St Davids Close, Brackla – 70 per cent cut back of hedge between properties.
Mr Julian Thomas – Rear of 2-5 Parc Tyn Y Waun, Llangynwyd, Maesteg – 30 per cent reduction of

hedge to rear of dwellings including holly, sycamore and hazel trees.
Brains Ltd – The Red Dragon, Litchard Hill, Litchard – Crown lift trees and removal of limb.
Miss Suzanne Padden – 1 Neville Road, Porthcawl – Single storey extension to side of property secured to fence.
Mr A Carter – 10 Juniper Close, Porthcawl – Wooden cover walkway to side of property secured to fence.
Valleys to Coast Housing –

Tudor Estate, Maesteg – Property repair and external wall insulation system to 79 properties.
Mr Glen Girletz – 87 Skylark Road, North Cornelly – 2m close boarded fence on side of property.
Mr Ian Crow – 4 Raphael Avenue, Brackla – Single storey extension to side and balcony to rear.
Invacare Ltd – Pencoed Technology Park, Pencoed – Single storey extension for storage area.

Mr D D and Mrs S Pondevie – 27 Heol Waldsassen, Pencoed – Amendment to planning consent P/11/706/FUL (single storey extension), pitched roof in lieu of flat roof.
Mr John Groom – 1 Preswylfa Court, Cychurch – Erection of carport.
Mr Chris Reeve – Land at Minfford Road, Pencoed – Relax standard condition of P/06/292/FUL to permit the period of approval for

further five years.
Mr Peter Lane – 41 Wernlys Road, Penyfai – Two storey extension to side of dwelling and new roof and verandah to porch.
M P Amusements – 20 Commercial Street, Maesteg – To operate AWP machines from the premises (family entertainment centre).
Mr Lewis – 3 Coed Ty Maen, Bridgend – Edwardian conservatory to rear.
Mr Howard Husk – 36

Leyshon Way, Bryncethin – Attachment and conversion of detached garage and conservatory to rear elevation.
Mr Nathan Enoch – 46 Lletai Avenue, Pencoed – Single storey extension.
Renewable Energy Partnerships – Land at Newton Down, Porthcawl – Request for scoping opinion for Newton Down Windfarm.
Mr Richard Tanner – 45 Wyndham Crescent, Bridgend – Single storey

domestic extension to side.
Swan Consulting Limited – Highway verge, Aldenham Road, Porthcawl – Install 15m Telefonica 02 telecommunications column with 6 no. antennae and ground based cabinet.
Mr R Woolcock – 13 Great Western Avenue, Bridgend – Attick conversion with roof extension.

Young farmers tread rehearsals boards for panto competition

MAENDY Young Farmers have again been very busy in recent months, beginning with the Glamorgan county Christmas party at the Grove Golf Club, Porthcawl.

The evening was well attended by all ages and by all clubs; it was a thoroughly enjoyable event in which everyone enjoyed a post Christmas get-together.

More recently, Maendy were joined by fellow Young Farmers Clubs Llantrisant and Bridgend on a very successful trip to Playzone in Swansea on January 19. The indoor play centre provided a fun filled evening for everyone.

In preparation for the forthcoming annual Glamorgan YFC pantomime competition, Maendy have been rehearsing tirelessly, along with organising costumes and building scenery. The competition will stretch over three nights from February 17-19 at The Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot.

Come along to watch the seven Glamorgan clubs take to the stage to

perform their production. Maendy will be performing last on the Sunday evening.

The performances start at 7pm each evening, and tickets can be bought from county organiser, Gwyneth Thomas (telephone 01656 864488 or email yfcwales_glamorgan@yfc-wales.org.uk) or on the door. For more information, please see our website www.maendy.btck.co.uk.

Prior to the competition, we will be holding a dress rehearsal parents' evening at Barry Memorial Hall on Thursday February 16; doors open at 7pm, curtain up 8pm. Maendy invite you to be swept away on a magical carpet ride to enjoy the vibrant sights and sounds and savour the flavour of "A Hot Pot of Ahji-Bhai" (an original recipe freshly prepared by Richard Harris and Richard Western).

Glamorgan Hunt members will also be taking to the stage for what promises to be a memorable performance of Cinderella – the play wot I wrote.

We hope to see you there on our last performances before the big night!

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AMBER AND SILVIA.

bit towards the end, but were unable to close that earlier big gap.

Oldcastle A eliminated another first team Crown Inn A by 63 points to 48, Coychurch Wanderers won 56-47 away to Laleston Inn B and the remaining match was a close contest between Pheasant Poachers and Oldcastle B which the former won 54-51.

Here are your weekly teasers:

1) Which 18th century poet is buried at St.Giles Churchyard, Stoke Poges – the setting for his most famous poem?

2) Name the two 20th century British Prime Ministers who served both a Queen and a King?

3) Which indoor sport in 2010 did Briton Nick Matthews become the World and Commonwealth champion?

4) Beethoven's Third Symphony 'The Eroica' was originally composed in whose honour?

A RUDGE (for Quiz League)

ANSWERS:

- 1) Thomas Gray.
- 2) Charles II and Lord Salisbury.
- 3) Squash.
- 4) Napoleon.

Success of Fiddler on the Roof is a real team effort for Porthcawl Comprehensive



**REVIEW by PHILIP IRWIN.
PHOTOGRAPHS by MALCOLM NUGENT.**

WATCHING this year's Porthcawl Comprehensive School musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, was a little like going to the Emirates Stadium, watching Arsenal win 7-1, and finding that the goals were scored by Ramsey, Artea, Walcott and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

If that rather laboured football analogy works, it is because I was casting Joe Wiltshire-Smith as Robin van Persie.

After Joe dominated the stage last year in *Les Misérables* in the role of Jean Valjean, you had to expect that he would do the same again as Tevye. After all, if you think of the film of *Fiddler*, can anyone name who else was in it other than Topol?

So, it is to the school's credit that the overwhelming impression from the show at the Grand Pavilion was of the strength in depth of the cast, and of how so many young performers grabbed their moment.

This is not to downplay Joe's contribution. He was faultless, and brought out the comedy in the role – and also the great sadness that comes with this story. He sang well too, but it is no bad thing if Robin van Persie records three or four assists for a change!

Fiddler has probably the most downbeat ending of any musical. The Jewish families are driven from their homes, and the audience is well aware that this persecution is just a precursor to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Therefore, it took a little time for the audience to get on their feet and give the young cast the ovation that they deserved, but it was heartfelt and enthusiastic.

Catherine was a fine Fantine last year in *Les Mis*, but as Tevye's wife, Golde, she had a chance to show that she has a real flair for comedy; as well as a very fine voice.

Harmony, playing the role of Hodel, Tevye's rebellious daughter,

made a big impact last year in the role of Eponine, and her voice has continued to get better and better. Allied to that, her time with the Bridgend Youth Theatre (BYT) has given her great stagecraft and a real presence.

All three of Tevye's eldest daughters rebel in different ways, and two more BYT regulars, Hazel Elstone (Tzeitel) and Natasja Bryant (Chava), were excellent as the other two.

Strength in depth was the key and that is best illustrated by Sophie Howe, a finalist in the Bridgend Young Singer of the Year, who played the comedy role of Yente, the old lady who is the village matchmaker. She didn't get a big number to showcase her voice, but she showed that she too is an excellent comedienne.

In *Fiddler*, the girls get the best songs, but the boys in the cast made the most of their parts. I enjoyed Ryan Jenkins' turn as Lazar Wolf, the elderly butcher who is Tzeitel's frustrated suitor, and Richard Evans, Tom Hunt and Harvey Jones were all convincing as the young men who won the hearts of Tzeitel, Hodel and Chava.

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Therefore, it took a little time for the audience to get on their feet and give the young cast the ovation that they deserved, but it was heartfelt and enthusiastic.

On Saturday night, the school's headteacher, Mr Kenny Dykes, took to the stage to praise the cast, and also to bring on stage members of the

production team.

He singled out the

musical director, Lisa Mayo, who only started at the school in January, and her assistants, Rhian Atherton and Kathryn Lewis, and also the production manager, Joe Smith, and the show's director, Kelly Hardwick.

He had great pride in

saying that the stage

crew behind the scenes

were all pupils – includ-

ing stage manager Zoe Davis.

There can't be many heads who have the accent and the comic timing of Billy Connolly (but fortunately none of the four-letter words!), and it was obvious that Mr Dykes cherishes this chance to praise the attitude, application and tal-

ent of his pupils.

With many of this cast

back next year, he can

start planning that

speech as soon as he

likes!



Joe Wiltshire-Smith as Tevye (above) wishing he was a rich man and (below) drinking with Lazar Wolf (Ryan Jenkins).



Tevye's three eldest daughters were played by (left to right): Harmony Miller, Hazel Elstone and Natasja Bryant.



ABOVE: matchmaker Yente (Sophie Howe) makes Tzeitel an offer she does refuse.



Tevye and Golde (Catherine Walters) fail to agree.

Cast, orchestra and production credits

Cast list:

Tevye – Joe Wiltshire Smith
Lazar Wolf – Ryan Jenkins
Yente – Sophie Howe
Perchik – Thomas Hunt
Motel – Richard Evans
Chava – Natasja Bryant
Golde – Catherine Walters
Tzeitel – Hazel Elstone
Hodel – Harmony Millar
Fyedka – Harvey Jones
Mordcha – Nathan Wootton
Avram – Sam Pryce
Mendel – Jamie Sayce
Rabbi – Jack Bravery
Shprinche – Anna Arrietta
Bielke – Naomi Phillips
Fruma-Sarah – Jessica Evans
Grandma Tzeitel – Chloe Carson
Constable – Andrew McQueen
The Fiddler – Rhys Owen
Nahum The Beggar – Dylan Griffiths
Sasha – Phillip Pickett
Female Company:
Jess Beesley
Ellie Henderson
Eve Lewis
Georgia Shallish
Tara Evans
Anna Bonet
Julie Bold
Lucy Pugh-Bevan

Hope Dabernig
Sarah Pickett
Rachel Allen
Ellie Morris
Rachel Taylor
India Rees
Hannah Berry
Jessica Wood
Harriet Rees
Jess Torkington
Lois Hadley
Katie Roberts
Abbie Lee Owen
Imogen Kent
Emma Phillips
Bethan Brooks
Emma Jenkins
Rachel Lewis
Hannah-Eve Thomas-Peters
Tabitha Carrington
Ellie Rosser-Stanford
Harriet Maine
Kath Owen
Hannah Skidmore
Susan Owen
Grace Reynolds
Carys Phillips
Rebecca Hurn
Rachel Hopkins
Jess Wood
Harriet Rees
Carys Phillips

Male Company:

Jack Davies
Christian Long
Jack Jones
Nathaniel King
Callum Walters
Richard Price
Jack Davies
Jamie Lees
Cian Jenkins
Nathaniel Lewis
Callum Pearshall
Owen Thomas
Rhys Waring
Robert Davis
Production Team:
Director – Miss Kelly Harwick
Musical director – Miss Lisa Mayo
Assistant musical direction – Mrs Rhian Atherton and Mrs Kathryn Lewis
Production manager – Mr Joe Smith
Assistant choreographer – Miss Hannah Grant
Assistant production manager – Keiran Bluck
Stage manager – Zos Davis
Deputy stage manager – Eleri Connick
Assistant stage manager – Rebekah Bradford, Connor Watkins
Stage assistant – Andy Lewis-Jones

Lighting – Mr Aaron Unsworth

Sound – Pavilion

Follow spot – Sam Buffett, Tom Hamilton

Mic runner – Rebecca Brown

Costume – Mrs L Thompson, Miss Tracey Lambert, Miss Holly Thelwell.

Costume mistresses – Kate Ebdon, Lois Rossini, Caris Ferrari Lane,

Rebecca Hunt, Lauren Jones, Bethany Thomas, Rebecca Hurn.

Orchestra:

Flute/Piccolo – Karen Hnyda
Oboe/Cor Anglais – Elin Howard, Sam Baxter
Clarinet – Lizzie Hunt
Bassoon – Lucy Millersip
French Horn – David Hughes
Trumpet – Simon Gray, Robert Young
Trombone – Gwyn Daniels
Violin – Helen Williams, Lucy Noden, Chris Hontoir, Elizabeth Jones
Tuba – Peter Greenwood
Cello – Hannah Thomas
Bass – Geraint Evans
Guitar – Dave Jeffries
Percussion – Huw Griffiths, Sam Williams
Keyboard – Dan Pugh-Bevan

Bridgend firms' hat-trick of top Chamber awards

PICTURED RIGHT:
Nich Lee, head of marketing at Staedler, with Monica Gibson-Sweet, Dean of Faculty of Business and Society at the University of Glamorgan, and Duncan Savage, the managing director of Staedler.



Fiona Withey, business development and project management director, Philip Roberts, chair of Biotech and Rachel Griffiths, operations director at Biotech.

A TRIO of Bridgend firms have triumphed at this year's South Wales Chamber Awards, run in association with the University of Glamorgan Business School.

Biotech Services International picked up the award for International Company of the Year, Staedler UK Ltd scooped the Excellence in Marketing prize, while Donna Turner-Kot, of n-ergy consortium won Entrepreneur of the Year.

Biotech Services International, based at Bridgend Industrial Estate, is one of the UK's leading clinical trials services and supply companies.

Established in 1997, the company has grown significantly by building strong partnerships with clients across the world, particularly in the USA, Canada, Japan, Israel and Europe, and in the last four years has seen its turnover grow by 353 per cent and profit increase by 78 per cent.

Philip Roberts, chairman at Staedler, said: "To win such a prestigious award is incredible. We are very grateful for the support given to us by the Welsh Government through its trade missions and market con-

LOCAL GROUP STRESSES BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

A LOCAL volunteer organisation say that people can boost their confidence, improve chances of getting a job, meet new people and learn new skills by taking up the wide variety of volunteer opportunities available

in Bridgend county borough.

BAVO (Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations) is looking for more volunteers of all ages and abilities, offering up to date advice and guidance.

BAVO has over 100 registered voluntary organisations offering a wide range of opportunities. Their volunteer centre can match skills and interests with a vacancy that suits a person's skills, including office work, conservation, education, and driving.

Ben Upton, aged 20 from Bridgend, is a volunteer with the British Heart Foundation furniture and electrical store. Ben says: "Ideal with stock in the warehouse, complete func-

tion testing on electrical items to ensure they are safe to use and deal with building items that come in flat packed.

"I also volunteer two and half hours of my time each week with KPC Youth in Pyle, helping young people

call 01656 810400 or visit www.bavo.org.uk.htm. You can also find the latest volunteering opportunities by visiting the Wales Volunteer website, www.volunteering-wales.net.

Villagers get set to fight travellers' site proposal

REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

RESIDENTS at Llangan have labelled a Vale Council plan to develop a gypsy traveller site with 21 pitches, as "totally disproportionate".

Organisers told The GEM that they were "overwhelmed" by the turn out at a recent meeting in Llangan church to discuss the proposals, which are included in the Vale Council's Local Development Plan (LDP).

More than 180 people squeezed into the little church, including local councillor Ray Thomas, and pledged their support to the organisers, the Llangan Action Group, in their challenge to the Vale Council plan.

The organisers stressed that this is not a personal attack on the single family that occupy the current unauthorised site, or against

gypsy travellers in general.

A spokeswoman said: "The site is, however, illegal and even though many attempts have been made by the residents to get the council to execute a undertaking made by them, they have failed to do so."

"The 2011 LDP proposals do not meet local or national criteria for development in rural locations.

"The local authority has also failed to consult with the statutory services, and the Fire Service has stated that the site does not comply with its minimum access requirements.

"Further, the proposals do not meet the criteria such as a preference for single family sites, close to health services and shops that gypsy and travellers themselves identify in the Vale report prepared by Fordham Research in 2008."

She continued: "In a

village of only 35 houses, a development of six residential and 15 transit pitches, each, including two caravans, car parking, day room and facilities, is totally disproportionate.

"It will nearly double the size of the village, impacting on local infrastructure, including the local primary school.

"If this is what the Vale Council in the LDP, feel is 'sensitive' development, then all communities need to beware.

"We are urging people to take MP Alun Cairns' advice in the last issue of The GEM and respond to the consultation on the LDP objecting to this proposal.

"For advice, the Llangan Action Group can be contacted by email at llanganaction@gmail.com".

Bella Donna ladies choir in fine voice

YSTRADOWEN AND DISTRICT WI NEWS

IN contrast to January, this month's meeting on February 1 was clear and crisp, although cold.

President Jan Foyle welcomed the Bella Donna ladies choir and their director, Geoff Howells, who were to entertain us. Geoff said he always enjoyed performing to WI groups. His mother had been WI member, and he appreciated the organisation's aims – to promote women.

The Bella Donna ladies choir was formed in September 2009; they are a group of ladies who enjoy singing and most of them are not experienced singers. They meet every week in premises over a Cowbridge shop to practice.

The focus is on medieval melodies and modern day songs. The performance started with a selection of melodies, some more than 1,000 years old.

A small group of very fortunate men were allowed in to join in some of them! After a short break, the ladies returned to perform a selection of modern day music. This began with 'Thunder Rise', popularised by

Rolf Harris, featuring aboriginal images, which set our feet tapping.

They moved on to a great favourite, 'Tonight', from West Side Story.

The concert concluded with two more well-loved songs from our era, 'Wild Horses' by Mick Jagger and 'Drive My Car' by John Lennon.

WI member Irena gave a vote of thanks to Geoff and the choir for a most enjoyable entertainment. As we had invited other WI groups in our link, members had provided a wonderful selection of homemade cakes.

After the break, Jan chaired the business for the evening. Members who had provided cakes were thanked for their contribution.

Rose Ives and Mary O'Leary have booked our New Year's dinner for February 29 at the Duke of Wellington in Cowbridge.

The monthly walk will be held on February 15 (weather permitting) and the coffee morning at the White Lion on February 22. Next month's meeting will be held on March 7. As always, new members will be made very welcome.

EL



Donna Turner-Kot, managing director of n-energy consortium

YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE COMMUNITY NEWS!

Age Concern concert

OVER the months I have been advising charities that most choirs in the Bridgend area will perform in concerts to raise money for any deserving charity.

Age Concern have asked Maesteg Gleemen male voice choir to perform in a concert to raise money for the charity.

The Gleemen, of course, were prepared to help and the choir will be performing in a concert at Llantwit Fardre sports club, Church Village, Pontypridd on St David's day, March 1, at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £5 and can be obtained from Age Concern Morgannwg Ltd, Principality House, Rear of 31, Taff Street, Pontypridd (telephone 01443 490650).

New

accompanist
MAESTEG Children's Choir has obtained the services of experienced and well known accompanist, Rhianon Williams-

Hale, to succeed accompanist Ryan Wood, and wish her many happy years with the choir.

Rhianon has been an accompanist for Bridgend male choir, and at present is also accompanist for Ynysbwyl Ladies Choir.

The choir rehearses at Plasnewydd primary school on Saturday mornings during term time between 10am and 12 noon, and is open to all children from the Bridgend CBC area aged 8 to 18.

New club

MAESTEG Salvation Army based in Castle Street, Maesteg is holding a Natter Chatter Club on Monday, February 13 at 2.15pm.

The club is being formed so that friends can enjoy meeting each other and have a good all round chat, while enjoying a cup of coffee or tea. The Salvation Army is merely opening its premises; there will be no sermons.

Leader sought

BRIDGEND Male Choir of over 90 members and twice winners at the Welsh National Eisteddfod in the last

decade, recently lost its musical director through the passing away of John Jenkins.

It is now looking for another enthusiastic and experienced musical director to lead its youthful musical team. Contact Gareth on 07773 170373, preferably before February 25.

WI meeting

ABERKENFIG & District WI recently held its first committee meeting of 2012 and events planned for the year were agreed on.

There is a guided walk in Cardiff on March 20, then the Spring council meeting of the Glamorgan Federation on April 18 in Barry Memorial Hall, and the National Federation of Women's Institutes AGM on May 30 in the Royal Albert Hall.

The annual lunch will take place in the next month or so and the fish and chip lunch will be in the Easter School holidays.

There will be a one minute of silence at the next meeting, in memory of Marian Edwards, who passed away on January 15.

New members and visitors are welcome at

meetings which take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Welfare Hall, Heol Persondy, Aberkenfig.

For further details, contact secretary Pat Lewis on 01656 721933 the Bridgend Cobwebs website: www.cobwebs.co.uk

Labour topics

ST BRIDE'S

Minor Labour

Party's recent meeting chaired by Coun Janice Lewis, discussed the rising levels of homelessness amongst individuals in the area; progress on the new building of Ynysawdref comprehensive school; to form the new "Gateway to the Valleys" secondary school; and the modernisation proposed for Oldcastle primary school.

It was noted that Bridgend CBC was now at the top of recycling schemes throughout Wales.

Items in the consultation document on proposed changes to the Ogmore constituency

were also discussed.

Coun Mel Nott, leader of Bridgend CBC, explained proposals on providing safer routes for children going to school in the area and parking restrictions in the vicinity of Sarn Post Office.

Carers' Centre

BRIDGEND Carers'

support centre is based at 87 Park Street, Bridgend, (telephone 01656 658479).

Tomorrow (Friday, February 10) and February 17 the centre will hold a 'Looking after me' course between 10.30am and 1.30pm.

It will focus on relaxation techniques; managing anger, fear and frustration; problem solving and action planning techniques including self management; these will help carer's look after their own health while caring for others.

On February 13 and February 15 (1pm to 4pm) drop in facilities are being provided for a sociable meeting. On Monday, February 13 there will be the book Cwtch between 1pm and 2pm.

On February 14

NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.
I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: CLIVE MITCHELL

1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ

TEL: 01656 725399

email: tyncoed1@yahoo.co.uk



between 10.30am to 12.30 noon, there will be a meeting of the Health and Well Being group, this normally covers a six week cycle and individuals who have taken part in previous sessions have agreed they have attained a healthier lifestyle.

Also on the same day and times there will be support for carers who have suffered recent bereavement at a coffee morning.

On February 16 there will be an 'Outreach' group in Maesteg Council Offices with the Citizens Advice Bureau between 10am and 1pm.

On Fridays, at the centre there are appointments available with Macmillan and Relate providing free counselling for carers who are affected by cancer.

To book call Rachel on 01652 874186.

CAB workshops

THE Citizen's Advice Bureau will be providing advice on monetary difficulties at workshops in the following areas:

Nantymoel Berwyn Centre Wednesdays 12.30pm to 1.30pm; Evanstown

Community Centre Wednesdays 3.30pm to 4.30pm; Llangenior

Richard Price Centre Thursdays 9.30am to 10.30am; Betws Life Centre Thursdays 10.30am to 11.30am; Wildmill Community Hub Thursdays 12 noon to 1pm.

Bug Club'
MANY Ogmore Vale primary school pupils are reading books within the 'Bug Club' reading programme,

this is part of an online reading world which opens up to exciting activities sessions and gives many opportunities to support and encourage the children to read.

She believes that parents would also benefit from looking at the books their children are reading on the web site and understanding how much their children gain from this site <http://www.bugclub.co.uk>.

Rehearsals

THE Cör Meibion Cwm Garw (Garw Valley male voice choir) final rehearsals for the Festival of a Thousand Voices on march 24, will take place in the Neath Sports Centre on February 19.

Can you give Bruce a home?

DOG OF THE WEEK

THE GEM has joined forces with the Dogs Trust to find suitable homes for inmates at the Bridgend rehoming centre.

BRUCE is a five-

year-old border collie. He is very loving, and adores lots of cuddles.

He is affectionate and rewarding, and is looking for a quiet,

adult-only home where he can go on lots of long walks.

He does get on with other dogs as long as they are introduced properly, which we can

help you with.

If you would like to offer Bruce a home, please pop in to Dogs Trust, Court Colman, Pen-y-fai, Bridgend, or call us on 01656 725219. There is a video of Bruce and one of his friends, George, on our YouTube page: www.youtube.com/dogs_trust

We welcome your local community news...
Please email gemeditor@tin-dlenews.co.uk

Cai Williams, Ellie Bevan, Lucy Roach and Samuel Maddock for their excellent behaviour during lunchtimes last week and as a reward they will be joining Mr Goldsworthy for lunch.

Cross-country: Due to the state of the fields at Cyngfig Comprehensive School, last Friday's cross country race was cancelled.

Inter-school matches: On Friday, January 27, the school played rugby and netball away against Pencoed Primary School. In a very hard fought match, the rugby A team produced an excellent performance.

With time running out, the game was heading for a draw when up popped Leon Jones to score the only try of the match which was then converted by Luke Dingle to give the school a 7-0 victory.

The school B team also had a tough game but ended up with an excellent 15-5 win, with two tries from Bradley Jenkins and one from Callum Brennen.

Unfortunately, the netball teams had an off day with A team losing a narrowly contested game by 12-11 and the B team losing 12-1. However, everyone did their best and enjoyed the matches.

Jubilee

KENFIG Hill RFC ladies section are celebrating their Diamond Jubilee on Saturday, March 17 at 1.30 pm. They would like to invite any past members to join them in the Rugby Club lounge for a buffet and drinks to celebrate the occasion and share a few memories. They would also be delighted if you have any memorabilia or photographs that you could take along.

Mynydd Cynffig Infants School

TOMORROW (February 10), 'Popstars' will be going into the school to give a free taster dance session with all classes.

Attendance award: Last week's attendance award went to class 6 with a brilliant 96.2 per cent attendance.

Bikes and scooters: While they would like to encourage children to ride to school on their bikes and scooters, it is requested that they dismount at the school gate and not ride within the grounds, to avoid accidents.

Footballers and rock band to join forces

A local disabled football team is joining forces with young rock band Approaching Danger to raise money to attend an upcoming tournament in Spain.

On February 16, Special Olympics Bridgend DFC are joining the young rockers to pull Denway Travel's minibus at the Caefatrri to raise money to send the team out to the Catalan Cup from June 2-7.

The Catalan Cup is a mainstream tournament, but for the first time SpainSportive are including a disabled section.

At the moment, there are 11 teams interested in playing in the disabled competition from all around the world including Australia, Holland and Mexico.

If you are interested in sponsoring the team, please contact the manager Keith Hall on 07817929549 or email bridgendifc@hotmail.co.uk.

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Bruce is looking for a new home.

COMMUNITY NEWS from KENFIG HILL AND PYLE by Richard Sims
Telephone: 01656 746840
Mobile: 07802 439679
E-Mail: richardsims@talktalk.net

Street party

THE picture of the street party on the front page of last week's GEM was quite a pleasant and surprise for my wife Sue. Although only five years old at the time, she remembers being there with her mother Betty Packwood and sisters Mollie and Margaret.

It brought back some wonderful memories of a happy childhood and reminded her of the friends she hadn't seen for many years. She said that the picture was taken on the dunes behind the junior school on New Road. She would like to extend a big thank you to Keith Morgan for bringing back such happy memories.

Wellbeing centre

THE activities being held by the Mental Health Matters, Wales at the Talbot Community Centre, Prince Road, on Wednesday, February 15, include the reading group from 3pm to 4pm and social afternoon from 1pm to 5pm.

Pupils' awards

MYNYDD Cynffig Junior School pupils who were nominated for impressing the staff at the school last week were: Low Powis - class 1, Joshua Coombes - class 2, Cai Quary - class 3, Musawir Afzal - class 4, Menna Smart - class 5, Tegan Hale - class 6 and Louie Flower from class 7. The headteacher's award went to Senem Akpinar.

Congratulations also go to Justin-Lei Healy, Charlotte Edmunds, Brandon Gitsham, Lauren Howe, Hadi Akpinar, Ffion Clarke, Shauna Lewis,

CARNIVAL BENEFITS LOCAL CHARITIES

SHARING the evening with the Portcawl Christmas Swim (see facing page) was the Buckaneers, the charitable group who organised Portcawl Carnival.

Chairman Kerry Marlow handed out cheques totalling £2,050 to nine local organisations.



ABOVE:
Kerry Marlow with
Katy Owens from the
National Deaf
Children's Society.



ABOVE:
Mauro Bisgani from
the handicapped
Children's
Pilgrimage Trust.



ABOVE:
Sue Marlow
collected a cheque
on behalf of
the Sandville.



ABOVE:
The Porthcawl Coastguards received a
cheque from both the
Carnival and the Swim.



ABOVE:
The
Portcawl Ukelele
Band received a
cheque from the
Buckaneers.



Ped White of Ty Elis
Counselling.



Evan Williams from
the civic fund.



ABOVE:
Matthew Bowden
from Porthcawl
Athletic Association.
The PAA received
cheques from both
charity funds at the
presentation in the
Hi-Tide.



ABOVE:
Dave King from
Porthcawl Fire
Service.



ABOVE:
Barbara Matthews and Keith Duggan
from Porthcawl Stroke Club received a
cheque from the Christmas swim.



ABOVE:
Representatives from the Bro Morgannwg
Baby Loss Support Group received
a cheque from the Buckaneers.

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SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

An open evening for students considering taking their AS/A2 Level studies or L3 BTEC courses will be held on

Tuesday, 21 February
between 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm

The swim committee take their bow on stage!



The swim committee (left to right): Wendy Richards, Marilyn Richards, Linda Stroud, Nicola Willis, Jeff Toombes and Ian Stroud.

Inspirations

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other items of local interest. Contact:
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COMMUNITY NEWS
TREOES, LLANGAN & ST MARY HILL
Your local correspondent is Nancy Davidge, "Tynewydd", Llangan, (01656) 860303

Community news

THIS month's council meeting held in the Llangan Community Hall, saw residents from Ffwrn Goch and St Mary Hill expressing their concern at the news that the travellers' site in 'Elasto Lane', Llangan, could be extended.

They were assured that everything possible would be done to prevent this.

There followed an interesting talk by Mrs Jane Williams, of the 'Creative Rural Communities'.

She outlined the many activities people could enjoy, including Pride in Our Villages, Pride in the Vale; and Greenlinks community transport service (a professional, friendly and accessible transport facility for those who need it most).

For more information, telephone 0800 294 11134;

Creative Rural Communities, Old Hall, Cowbridge.

The next community meeting will take place in the Treoes Community Hall on March 5 at 7pm.

Successful auction

LATEST update: the auction which took place on Saturday, January 29, in the Treoes Community Hall raised £3,200. A big thank you to everyone for their support and to the hall committee for their organisational skills.

Reminder

An illustrated talk on Dylan Thomas by Alan Jones will take place in St Canna's Vestry on Wednesday, February 15, at 7.30pm. Everyone welcome.

Church services

THIS year it is St Canna's church, Llangan's turn to celebrate Ash Wednesday. The service will take place on Wednesday, February 22, at 7.30pm.

The next family service is on Sunday, February 26, at 11.15am. All families are welcome and encouraged to join in the service, which takes on a different theme every month. Refreshments follow in the vestry.

I hope the lights leading to the church and the vestry are fully functional before anyone visiting sustains an injury!

Agency probes 'Orange plume'

ENVIRONMENT
Agency Wales is investigating reports that brightly coloured smoke plumes were emitted by Aberthaw Power Station on Monday morning.

The orange-coloured plumes were reported from locations across the Vale, including Llantwit Major, Barry and Aberthaw.

However, the agency said that its investigations had revealed that nothing untoward had taken place.

A spokesman for Environment Agency Wales said: "We would like to reassure people that this coloured plume can occur when releases from Aberthaw Power Station are well within the permitted safe emission limits."

"It is likely that Monday's event was caused by the release of a plume containing low levels of nitrogen dioxide."

"The plume can appear as an orange/yellow cloud or streak low in the sky under certain lighting

and weather conditions, and can move down the Bristol Channel with the wind."

"These conditions are much more common at this time of year, when the sun is low in the sky."

A spokeswoman for Aberthaw Power Station said that the cold, still air had meant that the cloud had not dispersed as it usually would, and said the orange colour was due to the sun."

Ladies are taught how to use colours to change their image

THE Newton WI branch meeting was held on February 1, when president Pearl welcomed 42 ladies.

She gave a list of the different trips and functions that will keep us all busy this year.

These include a Beetle drive in March, Pancake day and an education trip in May.

Marilyn gave the financial statement which is very healthy, and then Pearl introduced speaker Cherry –

NEWTON WI

an image consultant who used to work for the BBC.

Cherry used three models, Jan, Mallan and Pam, to show how different colours can really make a difference.

She said Mae West always said: "I'd rather be looked over than overlooked."

She also said to find what suits you, use accessories and watch your bodyline. I'll certainly be watching mine from now on!

Betty gave a vote of

thanks and, as usual, had everyone laughing.

The next meeting is on the first Wednesday in March at Gilgal Hall, Woodland Avenue. Telephone Pearl on 01446 772657 for details.

Patricia Theodore

Council supports Fuel Poverty Awareness Day

AS the cold snap continues, a national campaign which aims to highlight the help available to people living in a cold, damp home is being supported by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC).

To mark Fuel Poverty Awareness Day this Friday, February 10, the authority wants to help householders understand how to tackle issues of fuel poverty caused by high energy costs, poorly insulated homes and low incomes.

This follows a recent conference organised by BCBC and attended by delegates from across Europe which looked at how to tackle fuel poverty by making housing more sustainable and efficient.

Coun Phil White, the cabinet

member for Communities, said: "The council is committed to helping vulnerable households. We know that living in a cold damp home can lead to poor health."

"To mark Fuel Poverty Awareness day, we want to spread the word that help is available to ensure householders are kept warm and well, as well as help people to understand the links between fuel poverty and poor health."

"I'd encourage anyone who is worried about their fuel bill to contact the Energy Saving Trust or their energy supplier to get help and advice on staying warm without the fear of fuel debt and ill health."

The Energy Saving advice line can be contacted on 0800 512 012 or by logging on to www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/wales

Free internet classes for borough over-50s

A VOLUNTARY Association of Voluntary Organisations (AVVO) is running its 'Media 3 Over 50s' internet club, which offers one-to-one help and support to learn the basics of computer use.

You will learn how to use the internet with

confidence, keep in touch with family and friends worldwide, and shop and save money online safely.

Based in Commercial Street in Maesteg, sessions are every Monday from 10am–12 noon. For further details, call 01656 810400.

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OUR SHOWROOMS ARE PRESENTLY CLOSED WHILE WE COMPLETE ALL SALE PREPARATIONS

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GIs IN PORTHKERRY PARK:

'The Americans always seemed to win the battles over local girls!'

I WAS contacted recently by GEM reader Vic Baker in response to my request for information regarding the American troops in the Vale during World War II (WW2).

Vic lived in the last house in Oxford Street during WW2. He recalls seeing the British troops setting up canisters which acted as a deterrent to enemy air raids by enveloping the skies above Barry in foul-smelling black smoke.

One night a stick of German bombs fell nearby.

A bomb fell on number 2 Cambridge Street, the home of the Baxter family. Tom Baxter was in his bedroom when the bomb struck and was buried under debris for more than two hours before being rescued. He died shortly afterwards.

His wife Brenda was seriously injured and she died of her wounds the following month.

On the 'Tump' at the Knap was a dummy fort with guns made of wood and this was used as a decoy to lure away German bombers from the real fort on Nell's

Point.

At the start of the war, in the large field in Porthkerry, concrete triangles were installed all over the grass to stop German gliders coming down and to act as tank traps. The viaduct was perceived as a target as trains carrying aircraft parts passed over it on their way to Saint Athan. One landline missed the viaduct by 100 yards. Another one landed near the beach, causing an enormous hole. This soon flooded and was used by Vic and his friends as a swimming pool.

At the bottom of the Golden Stairs in Porthkerry was a pill box with machine guns. The remains of the foundations of this can still be seen.

The British soldiers built a canal going from the stream at the bottom of the Golden Stairs across to the cliffs on the other side of the park.

It was about 15-20 ft across and several feet deep. Children used to build rafts out of discarded timber and sail on it.

The first time Vic saw a Thompson sub-machine gun, or 'Tommy Gun', was when he truanted from

school to spy on the troops. He saw commandos crawling along ditches with knives in their mouths. They would lie on barbed wire and others would scramble over them.

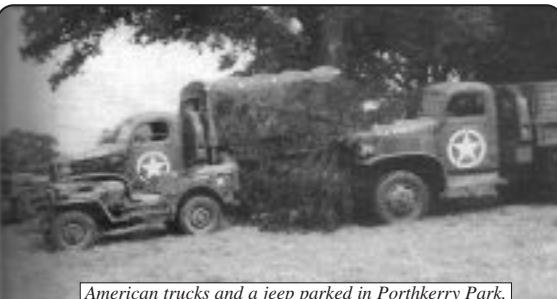
When the Americans arrived in 1942 they removed the concrete triangles and used the large field as a parking area for their GMC trucks. Vic remembers seeing nearly 1,000 of them parked there. The whole field seemed full of trucks and GIs.

This was the first time he had seen so many black men. There were hundreds of drivers and mechanics stationed in the field and they would play poker on blankets spread out on the ground.

The local children would sneak inside the trucks and take sweets from the cabs. Vic crept inside one truck and found it to be loaded with tins of fruit juice.

At that time in the war he was lucky if he had a glass of lemonade with his Sunday lunch so this was a real find. His grandfather's shed was full of fruit juice when he had finished liberating it!

The Americans wanted guards for their trucks so they built a



American trucks and a jeep parked in Porthkerry Park.

hut on the right-hand-side of the first gate into the park. British soldiers huddled around a pot-bellied stove inside as they had no electricity. They carried out their ablutions in the ponds at the bottom of the hill into Porthkerry.

One day Vic and his mother went looking for mushrooms in Porthkerry near the top of the viaduct and saw a freak of nature - the whole field was white with mushrooms.

By the time they had finished he and his mother had collected 80lbs. At this time mushrooms were a shilling (5p) a pound, so they sold most of them and earned the equivalent of two weeks of his father's wages!

His mother and he went again the following day but there were no mushrooms to be seen. Then, Vic saw a white shape in the corner of the field and rushed towards it.

He picked a mushroom weighing a pound and three quarters and his story was featured in the local press at the time.

When he was 16, he went to the Savoy and the Unity Hall to the dances. These dance halls were a magnet for black soldiers as they were unable to go to these places in America because of the colour bar.

They spent the evening dancing with the local white girls. Vic recalls seeing quite a lot of fights between American servicemen

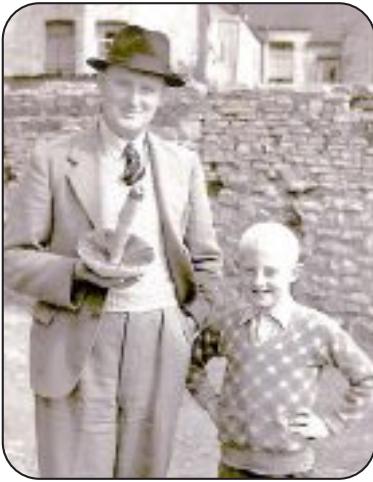
and sailors.

The Americans always seemed to win! Vic stressed that the Barry populace always seemed to be happy that the Americans were here.

The 'Barry at War' local history group is seeking to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the arrival of the American troops in the area in 1942 by staging a 'Wartime Weekend' event on Barry Waterfront and Barry Island Station on June 16-17.

If any readers have stories about the American troops in the area during WW2 and would be willing to share them in preparation for our event, telephone 07708 255295.

Dr Jonathan Hicks



ABOVE: Vic Baker with his father Albert and his mushroom find.

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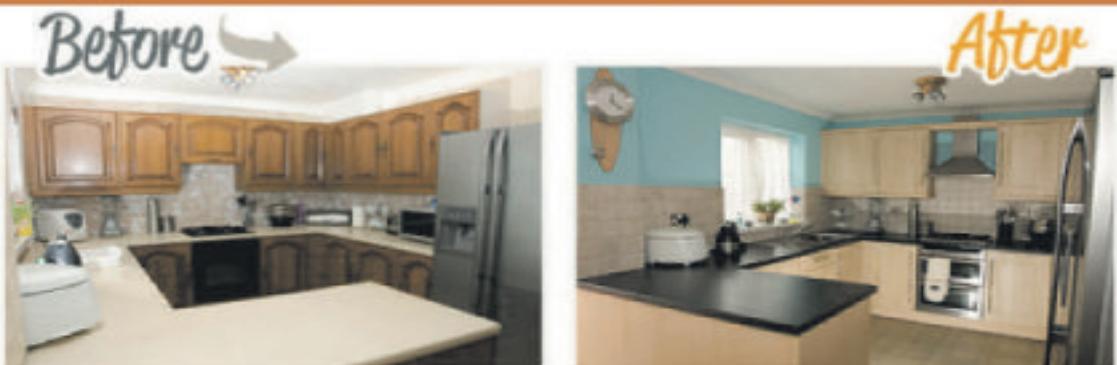


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Out and About with The GEM

Lucky GEM winners

THE winners of our recent Cardo competition were: Mrs Anita Clarke, Barry; Mrs Meryl Davies, Porthcawl; Miss C Williams, Cefn Glas; Mr Lyndon Thomas, Pyle; Mrs Margaret Lauder, Cowbridge; Mrs C L Breilly, Brackla; Bridget Gough, Porthcawl; Nadine Adams, Dinas Powys; Barbara Entwhistle, Barry;

Morgan Fenton, Pontyclun; Miss E A James, Ogmore Vale; Mrs Mace, Llanbether; Olive Rees, Maesteg; Alice E Phillips, Penarth; Mrs Esme Spencer, Porthcawl.

Congratulations to you all, and keep reading for more great GEM competitions!

PACT meetings

BUTTRILLS PACT, at 6.30pm on Thursday, February 9 at the Philip John Community Room, Barry Library, Tynewydd Road.

DYFAN and GIBBONSDOWN joint PACT, between 12 noon and 2pm, Monday, February 20 at Colcot Community Centre, Keates Way, Barry.

VALE PACT

LLANDOW/EWENNY PACT, on Wednesday, February 15, 7pm at Ewenny Village Hall.

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WHAT'S ON AND WHERE...

Valeways walks

THURSDAY, February 9 at 10.30am, 'Fine Views'. Meet at the car park next to Mace General Store, St Brides Major.

Cadoc meeting

THE Cadoc Conservative candidates are holding a coffee morning to meet residents on Saturday, February 11 at 10.30am-12 noon at the Glenbrook Inn, Coldbrook, with Coun Gordon Kemp (Leader of the Vale Council) and Andrew R T Davies (Conservative group leader in the National Assembly).

Dinas Powys in postcards
THE next meeting of Dinas Powys Local History Society will be held on Tuesday, February 14, at 7.30pm in Kynance Hall.

There will be an illustrated lecture by Mike Baker on 'Dinas Powys in Old Picture Postcards'.

An administrative fee of £2 for non-members and £1.50 for members will be charged. All are very welcome to attend.

Enquiries to Jeff Childs

COMPETING BANDS!

(02920 513615).

All Saints' Lent lunches

ANNUAL Lent lunches will begin again in All Saints' Church Hall, Park Road, Barry, every Thursday from February 23 until Thursday, March 29. They take place for six weeks from 12 noon until 1.30pm.

Tickets at the door are £4 each, including soup, crusty bread and cheese, with tea or coffee and a free raffle. All proceeds for the Kiyombe Scheme. Everyone welcome.

Llancarfan prize bingo

THERE will be a 'Prize Bingo tournament' at Llancarfan Village Hall on Saturday, February 25 in aid of the Cerys Potter Foundation.

Tickets will be £5 each which includes a soup supper and one 10-game bingo book. Extra books are available at £1.

There will be a bar available and the evening will commence at 7.30pm. Tickets are available from Julie

(01446 781271) and Graham and Kay (01446 781080).

Table top sale

THERE will be an Eisteddfod 2012 fundraiser on Sunday, February 26 in the Llantwit Major Hall, Llantwit Major.

Special project!

SPECIAL Olympics Bridgend DFC have launched a new incentive in the area, in which disabled players offer to tidy your garden, or wash your car, for a donation.

A spokesperson explained: 'The idea came from one of the lady players, who

Places are restricted, so booking is essential. Sellers 8am, and buyers 9am-1pm. Sellers will be asked for a £5 donation to the Eisteddfod. Contact Ros Lewis on 01446 793530, or rlewis.cardiff@bushinternet.com.

Talk in aid of organ appeal

THE All Saint's Church organ appeal will benefit from a talk and display 'More than just Names' by Dr Jonathan Hicks.

He will take a fascinating look at the stories behind the men on the War Memorials in the church on Tuesday, March 13 at All Saint's Church, Barry (7pm-8.30pm). Tickets £3, available from church wardens and fundraising committee. All proceeds to the organ fund.

Indo-Celtic music

A multi-talented duo whose music has been described by Robert Plant as "pure beauty through simplicity", will be bringing their unique Indo-Celtic sound to Cowbridge next month.

Robin and Bina Williamson will perform a variety of original, traditional and spiritual folk music on harp bowed psaltery dulcimer and other instruments, in the minstrel room above the Little Shop of Calm, at 8pm on March 24. info@littleshopofcalm.com

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number 708.

- £2,000: 599923.
- The rollover, which now stands at £3,500, was not won this week.
- £10: 274881, 842089, 381852, 203210, 113264, 656279, 452405, 144745, 578789, 724867, 542334, 375261, 898827, 544035, 238783, 285053, 514358, 504429, 617024, 492148.
- £5: 677233, 736442, 717678, 706214, 864136, 689115, 696808, 292836, 761162, 216995, 985391, 239105, 754066, 698335, 311451, 376747, 196933, 179825, 683868, 879693, 539948, 382735, 433657, 151205, 390043, 370484, 189625, 962195, 890045, 200721, 813479, 574915, 295763, 831201, 765579, 411774, 834457, 597519, 197486, 859365, 239445, 423982, 809861, 218526, 542657, 475096, 345509, 708200, 284452, 427605, 663812, 137946, 290790, 211149, 107310, 375831, 666589, 788872, 160294, 399521.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.
For lottery information please call telephone 02920 672062.

Upside down rainbow!



Barrivale Bridge Club recruits

LATEST results from Barrivale:

January 31: First, Tim Barsby and Noelle Bond, 60.32 per cent; second, Huw Thomas and Celia Thomas, 57.94; third, Alan Jones and Lyn Matthews 54.76.

Huw and Celia won on handicap. New members are welcome at Barrivale, if you would like to join, telephone 01446 733425 or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm.

A plea to all dog walkers

WE would be grateful if you could remind walkers and ramblers in your readership of the first rule of the countryside and close all gates behind them.

Recently, a group of walkers used a footpath around our field containing a flock of sheep.

Instead of using the footpath style provided, they used the field gate and failed to close it behind them.

This careless act could have caused very serious problems.

(Name and address supplied)

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
Barry 4.30 & 6.30pm Brynson Hall, Junction of Court Road & Llanover Street Lorraine - 01446 407002	Barry 4.45 & 6.45pm St. Francis Millennium Centre, Park Road, Porth-y-Castell Annamarie - 01446 736534
Rhoose - 6.30pm Celtic Way Community Centre, Celtic Way Helen - 01446 750738	Cardiff - 6.00pm All Welcome 8.00pm MEN ONLY Rob - 07708 941279 Copthorne Hotel, Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff
Penarth 5.30pm & 7.30pm Elfed Avenue Methodist Church, Elfed Road Sarah - 07255 852288	Barry - 6.00pm Cadoxton Methodist Church Church Road Joanne - 01446 404897
TUESDAY	THURSDAY
Barry - 5.45pm Market Street Social Club Upstairs Function Room Joanne - 01446 404897	Cowbridge - 10.00am Cowbridge Rugby Club Diane - 02920 551206
Barry - 6.00pm Comprehensive Aberthin Road Simone - 02920 599001	Barry - 6.00pm Highlight Park Community Centre, Barry Nia - 07793 885581
Penarth 9.30am & 11.45am All Saints Church Hall Victoria Square Tracy - 07894 275853	Dinas Powys - 6.30pm The Cabin by swimming pool, Hebron Hall Sarah - 07525852288
Penarth 5.00pm & 7.00pm All Saints Church Hall Victoria Square Tracy - 07894 275853	Barry - 10.15am St Helen's Church Hall Wyndham Street Niki - 01446 740394
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Regional AM Walks a Mile in a blind person's shoes



Cathryn Stephenson, mobility instructor for Guide Dogs and Andrew RT Davies, AM.

THE hazards blind people face while walking in the street with guide dogs, was experienced at first hand recently, by Andrew R T Davies, Assembly member for south Wales central.

He walked along Albany Road, Cardiff, accompanied by Cathryn Stephenson, a mobility instructor for Guide Dogs, Sue Jackson, a rehab officer for Cardiff Council and Mark Evans, a local guide dog owner.

The Guide Dogs Cymru Walk a Mile in My Shoes campaign aims to raise awareness of the obstacles and challenges blind and partially sighted people face every day as they

go out and about in our town centres. The hazards they face often include tables and chairs on pavements outside cafes, badly designed pedestrian crossings and poorly parked cars that block the pavement.

The regional AM reported: "I found the walk very illuminating. Firstly, because I realised the impact of the uneven pavements, which made it difficult to navigate.

"Secondly, I realised how much of an obstacle street furniture can be for blind and partially-sighted people.

"Finally, I realised the level of support that is out there for people in Wales with sight loss and that their sight loss should not prevent them from living their lives to the full."

Paddington Bear gift



Shop manager Alan Drury with the drawing.

DEVASTATED after an original Paddington Bear was stolen from one of Ty Hafan's Welsh charity shops, the manager, Alan Drury, was staggered to receive an original drawing of the famous bear from none other than the illustrator of the legendary Paddington books – R W Alley.

A spokeswoman for the Sully-based charity explained: "The artist, who lives in the USA, had picked up the story about the stolen bear via his Google alert, and obviously thought he could help to put matters right by producing one of his famous ink and watercolour masterpieces to send to Ty Hafan."

Mr Drury added: "It is an extremely kind and generous gesture by Mr Alley and I have contacted him to thank him on behalf of all the families and staff of Ty Hafan."

Bryn Hafren celebrates 90 years of Urdd

BRYN Hafren Comprehensive school was full of red, white and green recently, as pupils and staff dressed up in national colours to celebrate the Urdd's 90th birthday.

Activities were organised by the school's Welsh department so pupils could learn more about the history and work of Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

The biggest event was a party in the school hall at lunchtime, where pupils enjoyed games with a parachute and a slice of birthday cake.

Year-8 pupils, who attend the school's extra curricular Welsh club, also raffled a Mr Urdd cake which raised much-needed funds for the Daniel Downey Cwtch appeal.

The school would like to thank the Urdd's Llio Angharad Owen-Taylor for her support in making the day such a success.

NEWS FROM ST CYRES SCHOOL

Students show that they have singing talent!

TWO students at St Cyres School have been named as finalists in the Welsh heat of the national singing competition, 'The Next Brit Thing'.

This is a major achievement for the girls as the competition was open to all 11-19 year-olds and only 10 youngsters have made it to the Welsh final. The talented singers are Grace Hartrey and Elena Jamieson.

A spokesperson said: "The school is very aware of the enormous talent possessed by the two singers from previous occasions, including Elena's powerful performance in the school's successful version of *We Will Rock You* in December and Grace's at the Sixth Form Awards Evening in January.

"Both Elena and Grace have wowed audiences in school and out of school many times, but reaching the final of this prestigious competition is a new high."

The Welsh final of *The Next Brit Thing* will be held at Cardiff High on February 13.

Date with Marinsky Opera

REBEKAH West, a year-7 pupil at St Cyres, has recently completed a successful run of performances in the UK tour of *Oliver!*

The tour finished at the Wales Millennium Centre, where Rebekah will again be performing on April 1.

This time, the talented Rebekah will be singing with Only Kids Aloud, a national children's choir set up by



Elena Jamieson.



Grace Hartrey.

Tim Rhys Evans of Only Men Aloud, Rebekah's choir will be performing with the Marinsky Opera and will potentially be visiting Russia in June.

Reuel to tour India
YEAR-11 pupil, Reuel Bertram, will be touring India this April with the hip-hop dance troupe Jukebox.

Reuel enjoyed national attention last year when the Jukebox Juniors reached the final of TV talent show 'Got to Dance'.

Reuel puts his success down to hard work and he certainly deserves his dancing success for the dedication he has shown.

Theron and Oswalt impress in Young Adult

SINCE achieving huge success with *Juno*, the film's director, Jason Reitman, and writer, Diablo Cody, have experienced different fortunes.

While the former found even more success with *Up In The Air* landing critical acclaim and awards recognition, the latter saw her hotly-tipped *Jennifer's Body* dismissed as generic rubbish.

However, the two have teamed up again with *Young Adult*. It tells the story of Mavis (Charlize Theron), a writer of a once-successful 'young adult' series of books who returns to her hometown in a bid to win back her high school sweetheart (Patrick Wilson), who is now married and a father.

Teaming up with school outcast Matt (Patton Oswalt), will Mavis break up Buddy's family in order to get what she wants?

Since landing her Oscar for *Monster*, Charlize Theron has managed to balance worthy fare with the odd mega-budget movie.

However, if anyone were to dismiss her Oscar win as a triumph of prosthetics over acting ability, then *Young Adult* should change that, the actress wonderfully mesmerising in a film which is a low-key, muted delight.

Theron has a difficult task on her hands here, having to take a character who on the page is reprehensible and deeply unlikeable, and try and varnish her with the ability to garner, at least,

Victim's thanks

AN elderly woman from Cowbridge has thanked three local men who came to her aid when her handbag was snatched last Wednesday (February 1) in Millfield Drive.

One of the men was able to return her handbag to her within minutes of the incident, and Margaret Davies was so grateful that she came into the offices of The GEM the following day to pass on her thanks.

She said: "It was very frightening at the time, but three local men acted very quickly to reassure me.

"I have been round to their homes to thank them when the town to know how grateful I am."

A police spokeswoman said that a 60-year-old man from the Bridgend area has been arrested and charged, following a robbery that took place at Millfield Drive on Wednesday, February 1.

the audience's understanding of her motives.

She achieves this with aplomb, the actress refusing to tone down the character in any way, yet managing fleeting moments where she allows us to see behind the bitter facade and into the troubled mind of Mavis.

It takes no little skill to do this, and this is arguably Theron's best performance to date, playing the comedy and the tragedy skilfully. It is a turn that requires no small amount of nuance and her performance anchors the film both in terms of the tone but also the performances elsewhere.

The underrated

Wilson is impressive as the high school sweet-heart Mavis let go of, a man happy with his new life, but with the slightest hint that Mavis' return could provide a fresh spark, his seeming non-complicity again masquerading the possibility that he may fall under Mavis' spell.

The real breakout of the film however is Patton Oswalt, whose voice may be remembered from *Ratatouille*, but whose performances in the likes of *Balls Of Fury* will probably not.

However, Oswalt's turn here is one of incredible humour and pathos, the character given a touching and troubling back-story that Oswalt mines, much like Theron, for both comedy and tragedy.

While the characters are all well written, Cody's third act reveal sits particularly well,

The sharpest written character, the performance stands out, especially given Oswalt's low-key past. It's fair to say it's unlikely he'll be filling the cast list of the likes of *Failure To Launch* anymore, the comedian showing an impressive and hitherto unseen range.

Jason Reitman's hot streak in the director's chair continues here, the film lacking the pop culture bang of *Juno*, but also the strait-laced awards friendly feel of *Up In The Air*. *Young Adult* feels akin to his directorial debut, *Thank You For Smoking*, in terms of its unlikeable protagonist and off-key subject matter.

Using the muted visuals and concentrating on story and performance, Reitman's direction is muted but assured, the director showing a confidence in his ability without feeling the urge to be overtly showy or flashy. The control and conviction of his direction makes for an engaging work.

Shorn of the teen speak of *Juno* and *Jennifer's Body*, Diablo Cody's script is macabre and playful, her maturest work yet that isn't afraid of going to some dark places, yet tempering them with moments of hilarity and reality that keep the film grounded.

Recommended.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED:

Thank You For Smoking (2005), *Juno* (2007).

SCREEN TALK



by GARETH JAMIESON

giving Theron's character the modicum of sympathy the performance needs.

Certainly the low-key feel of the film, and the woozy pace may not suit all audiences, and neither will its off-kilter subject matter, but take a chance on *Young Adult* and you will be well rewarded with a delightful and darkly playful film.

VERDICT – A refreshingly bitter tale, *Young Adult* bristles with sharp characters and sharper dialogue, and is well directed by Jason Reitman. Charlize Theron and Patton Oswalt bring Diablo Cody's characters to rich life in an effort that makes for a satisfying low-key piece of work. Recommended.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: Thank You For Smoking (2005), Juno (2007).

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No more 'CORGI' – but gas safety body still offers vital information

MANY Vale residents will remember the gas safety standard agency CORGI – but that has now been superseded by a new body – Gas Safe.

Whatever the name, taking the advice of the safety organisation remains very important – so what is Gas safe recommending?

Be Gas Safe at home.
Understand the risks of dangerous gas work and only use a Gas Safe registered engineer

The Gas Safe Register is the official list of gas engineers who are registered to work safely and legally on gas appliances.

By law, all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register. It has replaced CORGI registration.

We take it for granted that our boilers, cookers and gas fires are safe.

It is only when there is a problem with an appliance that many people take any notice of it at all.

What are the gas safety risks of dangerous gas work?

Dangerous gas work can be deadly.

Badly fitted and poorly serviced appliances can cause the following gas safety risks:

- gas leaks.
- fires.
- explosions.

• carbon monoxide poisoning.

TOP TIPS FOR GAS SAFETY

1/ Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix or service your gas appliances, including your gas boiler, gas fire, gas cooker or hob; central heating system, radiators or your hot water system, if they are connected to either a Natural Gas or LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) supply

2/ Always check the engineer's Gas Safe Register ID card. All Gas Safe registered engineers carry a Gas Safe Register ID card, with their own unique licence number, showing the type of work they are qualified to do.

You can view our short video to understand what you need to check on the card.

3/ Get your appliances regularly serviced and safety checked every year, or in accordance with your manufacturer's guidelines, by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Your Gas Safe registered engineer will carry out tests and checks to establish your appliances are operating safely.

Where an appliance or pipework has been installed in an unsafe way, or is operating unsafely and the engineer can not rectify the situation immediately, they will follow the guidance outlined in the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (GIUSP) to make the installation safe.

This is the industry accepted document for guiding engineers on dealing with unsafe situations.

The Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (GIUSP) can be a complex document to understand. Download Gas Safe Register's factsheet to help you understand the procedure that engineers use to assess the safety of your gas appliance.

Another important safety option is to fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm.

This alarm will alert you to the presence of the poisonous gas carbon monoxide, produced by unsafe gas appliances.

If you think there might be a gas leak or notice any signs of carbon monoxide, act fast and follow the same advice as for gas emergencies.

Another important point to note is that more than 65 per cent of UK boilers are condensing, which means they produce waste water, known as condensate, when they create heat.

This is often drained away from the boiler using an external pipe, which can freeze, become blocked and cause the boiler to breakdown, during periods of cold weather.

The advice is: "Call out a Gas Safe engineer, or take out a service contract. Be safe, be warm!"

Gas Safe advice and information is available on www.gassaferegister.co.uk

THIS year, would you like your lawn to look more like a golf green and less like a cabbage patch? Hannah Stephenson consults an expert – top greenkeeper Graham Royden, of Royal St George's.

"The big difference between the course here

at Royal St George's and garden lawns, is that we use a different type of grass seed and spend literally hundreds of hours tending the turf.

But, that said, a few simple tips can help any gardener achieve near perfect results," he says.

1/ **Cut little and often.** Never take off more than a third of the

grass blade length, as this will damage the plant. In dry weather, reduce the frequency of cut, raise the mower height and consider leaving the cuttings on the lawn to help feed and shade the grass.

2/ **Watering:** Watering domestic lawns is a far more contentious issue and depends on local water

availability and any restriction notices that may be in force. Royden says that keeping moisture in the soil profile on a golf course is important.

3/ Feeding: The grass at Royal St George's is largely fed by an entirely natural product and Royden is a keen advocate of environmentally safe feeding.

He recommends three feeds a year: spring (March to April), summer and autumn (September to October).

It's important to ensure that, if using proprietary feeds, you use them according to the season – as the balance of nutrients for a spring feed is entirely different from that needed in the summer or autumn.

4/ Aeration: Aeration is vitally important because it allows light, moisture and air to reach the growing roots of the grass.

A normal garden fork dug into the lawn to a depth of about 10cm (4in) and about 15cm (6in) apart is ideal, although hollowed tined forks can also be used.

He suggests that the best time for this is in March and again in October.

Inspirational Homes

Could your lawn be like the green at a top golf course?

THIS year, would you like your lawn to look more like a golf green and less like a cabbage patch? Hannah Stephenson consults an expert – top greenkeeper Graham Royden, of Royal St George's.

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1/ **Cut little and often.** Never take off more than a third of the

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Inspirational Homes and Gardens

Happy dogs this winter

As the cold snap finally arrives, Dogs Trust is reminding pet owners to take extra steps to help their four-legged friends cope with the wintry conditions.

- Let your dog's winter coat grow, and if you have a puppy, short-hair or old dog, buy him a sensible coat.

- Keep your dog on a lead if it is snowing very heavily. Snow can be disorienting, affecting a dog's sense of smell so he could become lost.

- Make sure your dog is microchipped and wearing an ID tag

in case he does get lost. Wearing a tag is a legal requirement.

- Grit used on roads can cut their paws so make sure you wipe your dog's legs and feet after a snowy walk.

- Antifreeze is highly poisonous but tasty to dogs! Keep it out of reach.

- Never leave your dog in a car during extreme weather, hot or cold.

- If your dog falls through ice, never be tempted to go after them but encourage them to swim back to you.

For more information visit www.dogstrust.org.uk/az/w/winter to download a free 'Winter and Cold Weather' factsheet.

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WRAPPING UP FOR WINTER APPLIES TO YOUR HOME, TOO!

BURST water pipes cause misery and expense, so Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is advising customers to protect their plumbing from freezing temperatures so they don't crack up in the cold weather.

Welsh Water's operations director, Peter Perry, said:

"Wrapping up and keeping warm during cold weather doesn't just apply to people it's what your house needs, too."

"The most important piece of advice that we can give is to lag your water pipes. There's plenty of information on what is needed, as well as an explanatory film, on our website."

The main tips that the company offer to customers are:

- First, find out where your stop tap is located. It's often under the kitchen sink. Check it's working and that you can turn it off in an emergency.

If any taps in the house are leaking, get them repaired. Dripping taps can more easily freeze.

- If your property is going to be empty for long periods, you may wish to drain down the plumbing system.

To do this, turn off the stop tap and run the sink and bath taps until they run dry. It is

important to check with your plumber or central heating engineer that this is suitable for your particular heating system.

If you are just away for a few days, you may choose to keep the heating on low.

- Insulate exposed and external water pipes with pipe lagging material.

- You can also insulate your water tank in the loft and any exposed pipes.

If you have to call a professional in to do the insulation, it could still be a lot cheaper than clearing up after a pipe bursts.

Enquiries to the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water press office on 029 2055 6140.

More information is available at www.dwrcymru.com.



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Celebrate Valentine's Day



How Claudius the Cruel sparked the flames of love

VALENTINE'S Day began during the Roman Empire, under the rule of Emperor Claudius II, when Rose was involved in many bloody and unpopular military campaigns. Claudius the Cruel, as he was known at the time, was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues.

He believed that the reason was that soldiers did not want to leave their loves and families. As a result, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome.

This was when a Christian priest named Valentine, came to defend love in the empire. Valentine began to secretly marry couples, despite the emperors orders.

Farewell message

When Emperor Claudius was informed of these ceremonies Valentine was sent to prison where he remained until his death on February 14 in the year 270, when he was clubbed, stoned, then beheaded. History claims that while Valentine was in prison awaiting execution, he

fell in love with the blind daughter of the jailer, Asterius. Through his unswerving faith, he miraculously restored her sight. He signed a farewell message to her 'From Your Valentine', a phrase that still lives today.

If this is true, that would have been the first Valentine's card.

Pagan festival

Mid February was traditionally the time of the Lupercalia festival, an ode to the god of fertility and a celebration of sensual pleasure, a time to meet and court a prospective mate.

In AD 496, Pope Gelasius outlawed the pagan festival. But he was clever to replace it with a similar celebration, although one deemed morally suitable. He needed a 'lovers' saint to replace the pagan deity Lupercus.

The martyred Bishop Valentine was chosen as the patron saint of the new festival.

Pope Gelasius didn't get everything he wanted. The Pagan festival died out, it is true, but he had further hoped people would emulate the lives of saints.

True love

Instead, they latched onto the more romantic aspect of Saint Valentine's religious life.

While not immediately as popular as the more passionate pagan festival, eventually the concept of celebrating true love became known as Valentine's Day.

Until today, the tradition of honouring fertility taken from the ancient meanings of the holiday have endured and evolved with our contemporary adaptations of its meanings.

A legendary time to choose a mate!

MID-FEBRUARY has been a time for celebrating love ever since the Roman festival of Lupercalia held every year on February 15.

In honour of Juno, the goddess of marriage and fertility, it was rather like a country fair.

One of the customs was for young people to choose a sweetheart, or even just a good friend, for the year ahead.

Over the centuries, this festival gradually merged with the feast-day of St Valentine's, commemorating not

one, but two third-century Roman martyrs, both called St Valentine.

One was a priest in Rose who was clubbed to death for sheltering persecuted Christians; the other was a bishop who was martyred for holding forbidden weddings.

Legend has it that February 14 is also the day when birds choose their mates, hence the frequently used image of a pair of doves on Valentine's cards.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare wrote:

'Good morrow, friends,
Saint Valentine is past;
Begin these wood-birds
but to couple now?'

These are treasured collectors' items today.

Red roses - which were believed to have been the flowers of Venus, the Roman god-

dess of love and beauty

- became the traditional symbol of love in the Victorians' symbolic 'Language of Flowers'.

Unfortunately, roses are completely out of season in the northern hemisphere in February, so lovers have had to rely on hothouse blooms or imported flowers.

The other unmistakable symbol of love is, of course, the heart. Heart-shaped trinket boxes are as popular now as they were in Victorian times.

Likewise, earrings, brooches and other jewellery made in the form of hearts have always been favourite gifts for Valentine's Day.

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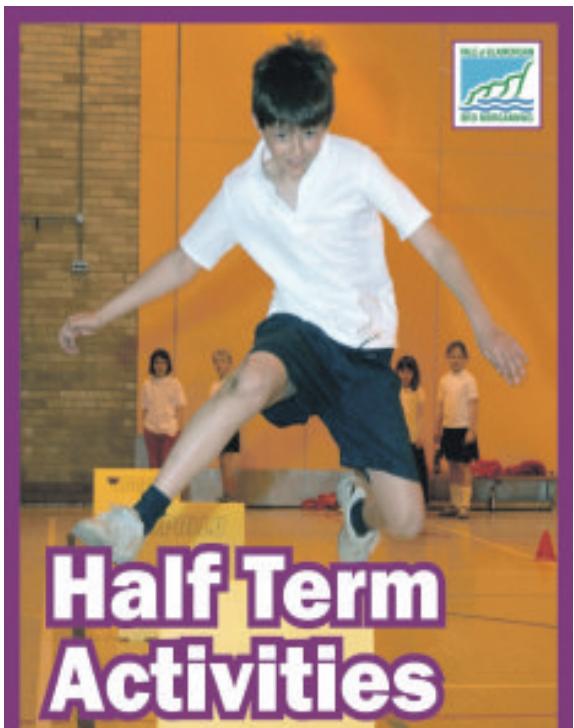
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PATHWAY TO SUCCESS WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

THIS week is Apprenticeship Week, the annual campaign dedicated to celebrating and promoting the value of apprenticeships.

Careers Wales is supporting the campaign and hopes it will encourage those thinking about taking up an apprenticeship to seek the advice they need, as well as encouraging employers to think about the value of apprenticeships for their business or organisation.

Avril Jackson, marketing manager at Careers Wales Cardiff and Vale said: "Apprenticeships can give individuals the skills and qualifications they need to build pathways to successful careers.

"At the same time, apprentices can make a valuable contribution to the workplace and are a cost-effective way of recruiting and retaining the staff employers need to help their business compete and grow."

To make recruitment easy, Careers Wales has developed an online apprenticeship matching service to enable employers to advertise their vacancies and for potential candidates to search and apply for opportunities.

The system, which was developed under contract to the Welsh Government

with support from the European Social Fund, not only provides a free advertising platform for employers, but also assists with managing the recruitment process by providing them with their own dedicated area to review applications, shortlist candidates and invite them for interview.

Employers will need to be linked to an approved work based learning provider to advertise vacancies on the system.

Alternatively, the process can be managed by a learning provider on their behalf. Information about providers who provide training for a wide range of sectors is also available on the website.

As well as maintaining the service, Careers Wales will ensure that those applying for apprenticeships receive support to help them achieve success whether this results in an apprenticeship or other opportunity which enables them to move forward with learning and work.

If you would like to speak to someone about apprenticeship opportunities, whether you are an employer or a potential apprentice, contact the Careers Wales national learning and careers helpline on 0800 100 900 (if calling from a mobile please call 02920 906801) or visit careerswales.com

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NOW BOOKING HALF TERM

So much on offer for kids these days

WHENEVER school holidays come around, it is impossible for people of a certain age to let the moment pass without recalling the 'good old days'.

You know the sort of thing – straight out of Monty Python's 'Four Yorkshiremen' sketch.

"When I was young, mom would send us out after breakfast and all day we would play at the blast furnace, the abattoir and the acid works.

"We would walk for miles in the country – never seeing another soul – and get back home as the sun was setting."

These recollections are guaranteed to conclude with the observation that kids these days are molly-coddled.

Well, The GEM makes no apology for

featuring a full range of activities for children this half term.

There are plenty of ways to burn up surplus energy, or to stimulate a young mind with a new experience.

What they have in common, of course, is that organisers plan ahead to maximise the experience and minimise the risk.

Follow the advice of the professionals and you can rest assured that your little one will be waiting for you at the end of the day – tired but happy!

Half term fun activities with Olympic flavour

Youngsters can sprint, hop, skip and jump their way through this forthcoming half term, by joining in a mini Olympic session at Cowbridge Leisure Centre.

Part of an exciting programme of activities on offer during the week at

the Vale of Glamorgan's leisure centres, the athletic session on Friday, February 17 (between 11am and 12pm) will get children set for the London 2012 Games.

Youngsters will also have the opportunity to learn indoor bowls at Cowbridge Leisure

Centre in a taster session on Wednesday,

(Continued on page 20)

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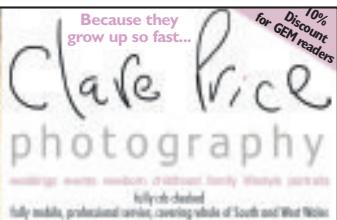
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Children's Choices

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Sporting choices for London 2012

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

February 15.

Street dance and cheerleading sessions, costing just £1, will be held at each of the leisure centres in Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major. Crash course swimming lessons will be available for children aged four and above in Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major.

Under-16s can also swim for free at specific times during the week, or take their pick from a number of pool-based activities including snorkelling, water polo and a rookie lifeguards course.

For full details, you can download an activity programme from www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/leisurecentres or call 01446 403000.

Further high-tech fitness sessions will be held daily in Barry in the form of interactive Trixter bike classes for youngsters aged under 15.

Soft play sessions will be held at all sites, while children will also love bouncing around in the inflatable mega

slide sessions in Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major.

The 'Big Pedal' is the UK's biggest school cycling competition, and aims to get kids active and raise money for the charity Sustrans. Nearly half of all children want to be able to get to school by bike, but only four per cent do – the three-week competition will show children and their parents just how easy it is to get around on two wheels.

Lee Waters, director for Sustrans Cymru, said: "Last year's Big Pedal saw children from more than 800 schools across the UK making nearly a million journeys by bike. This year's race will see even more families discovering just how easy it is to do the school run on two wheels. Children who cycle to school regularly are more active and alert, and better learners."

The race is funded by Bike Hub, the association of bike traders. Phillip Darnton, executive director of the Bicycle Association, said: "The future of cycling depends on every generation of kids learning and wanting to cycle. What better way to get started than joining in the Big Pedal."

"The cycle industry, through its Bike Hub levy, is delighted to fund this event for another year. 2012 is a very special year; the Big Pedal marks the start of the 'Summer of Cycling' – a new campaign bringing together everyone who cycles and encouraging them to introduce one new-comer to cycling during the year."

"That's why the Big Pedal is aiming for 1,000 schools to sign up and one million journeys to be made."

To get your school involved in the Big Pedal go to <http://thebigpedal.org.uk>.

A healthy start to the new year at Colcot Primary School

THE pupils and staff at Colcot Primary School have enjoyed two weeks of healthy living activities – each day started with fun exercise activities on the playground and in the hall.

The children enjoyed tasting fruits and vegetables and making various healthy meals and drinks.

It was a positive start to the new year with parents joining in the fun.

The children enjoyed a visit from the Vale catering team and Healthy Harry, and also from Konflux Theatre Group.

The year-5 pupils have taken part in three weeks of swimming lessons, while the other children have had the opportunity

of developing their street dance moves with dance teacher Emma Mallam.

Additional after school and lunchtime sport clubs were organised by the school's sports council, with the teachers showing their commitment by also starting a staff fitness club.

The year-4 pupils celebrated the success of the fortnight during their class assembly, which allowed the parents the opportunity to see how much the pupils had learnt and enjoyed the different activities.

We were also lucky enough to be given a donation from 'Sadabybox', which made up three healthy hampers. These were then raffled for free to the children.

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...On your bikes for the Big Pedal!

CHILDREN, parents and teachers across the area will be getting on their bikes for the journey to school this March – as part of Sustrans Big Pedal – with top prizes up for grabs for the schools that involve most people.

The 'Big Pedal' is the UK's biggest school cycling competition, and aims to get kids active and raise money for the charity Sustrans. Nearly half of all children want to be able to get to school by bike, but only four per cent do – the three-week competition will show children and their parents just how easy it is to get around on two wheels.

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THE SOUTH WALES SCORPIONS STUNG BY WIGAN WARRIORS

SCORPIONS	4
WIGAN WARRIOR XIII	34

with just Jamie Rooney unable to play due to personal reasons. They also fielded Jamie Acton from Wigan, who the Scorpions agreed a dual-registration deal with on Friday.

Wigan took the lead after four minutes in their second consecutive set. Anthony Gillings set up Shae Lyon Fraser to go over in the corner. Jack Murphy missed the kick.

It took a long time for either side to break through in the second half as defences tightened. The rainy conditions, but thankfully no snow, in Llandarcy took their toll, adding grease to both ball and pitch.

However, the new-look Scorpions side put pressure on their Super League opponents and came close to the line twice, forcing a goal-line drop-out on the second occasion.

Still the home side attacked. David James was held up over the line and then the same player, making his Rugby League comeback after a year out of the game, did well to pick up a tricky grubber at the other end to prevent a second Wigan score.

The disruption reduced a potentially large crowd to one of around 150, but those who were able to brave the conditions enjoyed an exhilarating game as the Scorpions were given the test they needed before their competitive season kicks off next week.

New coach Dave Clark gave 13 of his new players a run out, which Leatherbarrow goaled.

Leatherbarrow went from creator to scorer from the next attack with a clean break, running 20m to the line and converting himself to put the Warriors 28-4 up.

Scorpions eventually crossed the line for what looked like a good try, but it was ruled out by the touch-judge for off-side.

Curtis Cunningham had done well with a one-on-one to catch a high Shaun Owens lob and grounded it to the line. Murphy converted.

They added a third six minutes before half-time when Murphy finished off a slick move by scoring in the corner and doing well to convert himself.

The Scorpions weren't downhearted and carried on pressur-

ing the Wigan line and it paid off just before the hooter when David James bundled over in the corner. Lewis Reece missed the kick.

It took a long time for either side to break through in the second half as defences tightened.

The rainy conditions, but thankfully no snow, in Llandarcy took their toll, adding grease to both ball and pitch.

Wigan extended their lead just after the hour mark. A bouncing Leatherbarrow grubber was missing by the Scorpions' defence and Lloyd eventually pounced on a loose ball for his second of the afternoon, which Leatherbarrow goaled.

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Ravens flying through Cup with win over Blackwood

SEA View Ravens took to the field against Blackwood, knowing that a win would put them in a semi-finals of the Welsh Rugby Union cup – just one step away from the final in the Arms Park.

The game started at a frenetic pace and Sea View were put under pressure from the very first minute.

However, their defence was up to the task and the tackles kept raining in on each and every Blackwood player attempting to break the line.

Blackwood kept attacking and the link ups between their forwards and backs were impressive. However, a mistake from the Blackwood ladies allowed Sea View to gain possession and fullback Savannah took advantage, completely outstripping the Blackwood defence on the left wing and making it across the line for the game's opening try, which she duly converted.

Not to be easily beaten, Blackwood hit back hard and started trying to punch holes in the Sea View defence.

Good phases of play saw them work their way to the Ravens' try

line, only to be held up on more than one occasion, with the View's defence seeming like a brick wall.

Blackwood were not to be denied, however, and eventually the pressure told with a try midway through the first half, which went unconverted.

From the restart, Blackwood gathered and seemed to be looking to turn the screw and earn themselves another try. However, Sea View capitalised on another mistake, with scrum half Rafiuke crossing over after a blistering run. The try was again converted by Savannah. The first half ended 14-5 to Sea View.

The second half saw Blackwood piling on the pressure again and the View needed to defend once again.

However, in what was becoming a familiar story with the View defence, they refused to be pushed around and both the forwards and backs were putting in big hits to keep the opposition out.

Sea View managed to gain some possession midway through the second half and a chip ahead by Savannah was followed by a tug back from a Blackwood player.

Advantage was played, and all

the Sea View supporters, coaches and players were convinced they'd seen her touch the ball down for a try, only for the referee to bring them back to take the penalty.

Unfortunately, Blackwood managed to shut up shop this time and kept Sea View at bay, eventually gaining possession and starting their powerful attacks once again.

Blackwood's hard work paid off shortly after when they crossed the line again to secure their second try, which went unconverted, to take the score to 10-14 to the Ravens.

Despite further attacks from Blackwood, that saw The View putting in a heroic effort in defence, Blackwood were unable to score and the View kept the scoreline to 14-10.

Special mention goes to Karen Cooper and Kath Reed, who both had great games for Sea View.

Sea View would like to thank their coaches and management for their support, also their travelling supporters who made the journey to Blackwood in large numbers.

The Ravens now face a semi-final against Whitland on April 15.

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574, 577, 580, 583, 586, 589, 592, 595, 598, 601, 604, 607, 610, 613, 616, 619, 622, 625, 628, 631, 634, 637, 640, 643, 646, 649, 652, 655, 658, 661, 664, 667, 670, 673, 676, 679, 682, 685, 688, 691, 694, 697, 699, 702, 705, 708, 711, 714, 717, 720, 723, 726, 729, 732, 735, 738, 741, 744, 747, 750, 753, 756, 759, 762, 765, 768, 771, 774, 777, 780, 783, 786, 789, 792, 795, 798, 801, 804, 807, 810, 813, 816, 819, 822, 825, 828, 831, 834, 837, 840, 843, 846, 849, 852, 855, 858, 861, 864, 867, 870, 873, 876, 879, 882, 885, 888, 891, 894, 897, 899, 902, 905, 908, 911, 914, 917, 920, 923, 926, 929, 932, 935, 938, 941, 944, 947, 950, 953, 956, 959, 962, 965, 968, 971, 974, 977, 980, 983, 986, 989, 992, 995, 998, 1001, 1004, 1007, 1010, 1013, 1016, 1019, 1022, 1025, 1028, 1031, 1034, 1037, 1040, 1043, 1046, 1049, 1052, 1055, 1058, 1061, 1064, 1067, 1070, 1073, 1076, 1079, 1082, 1085, 1088, 1091, 1094, 1097, 1100, 1103, 1106, 1109, 1112, 1115, 1118, 1121, 1124, 1127, 1130, 1133, 1136, 1139, 1142, 1145, 1148, 1151, 1154, 1157, 1160, 1163, 1166, 1169, 1172, 1175, 1178, 1181, 1184, 1187, 1190, 1193, 1196, 1199, 1202, 1205, 1208, 1211, 1214, 1217, 1220, 1223, 1226, 1229, 1232, 1235, 1238, 1241, 1244, 1247, 1250, 1253, 1256, 1259, 1262, 1265, 1268, 1271, 1274, 1277, 1280, 1283, 1286, 1289, 1292, 1295, 1298, 1301, 1304, 1307, 1310, 1313, 1316, 1319, 1322, 1325, 1328, 1331, 1334, 1337, 1340, 1343, 1346, 1349, 1352, 1355, 1358, 1361, 1364, 1367, 1370, 1373, 1376, 1379, 1382, 1385, 1388, 1391, 1394, 1397, 1399, 1402, 1405, 1408, 1411, 1414, 1417, 1420, 1423, 1426, 1429, 1432, 1435, 1438, 1441, 1444, 1447, 1450, 1453, 1456, 1459, 1462, 1465, 1468, 1471, 1474, 1477, 1480, 1483, 1486, 1489, 1492, 1495, 1498, 1501, 1504, 1507, 1510, 1513, 1516, 1519, 1522, 1525, 1528, 1531, 1534, 1537, 1540, 1543, 1546, 1549, 1552, 1555, 1558, 1561, 1564, 1567, 1570, 1573, 1576, 1579, 1582, 1585, 1588, 1591, 1594, 1597, 1599, 1602, 1605, 1608, 1611, 1614, 1617, 1620, 1623, 1626, 1629, 1632, 1635, 1638, 1641, 1644, 1647, 1650, 1653, 1656, 1659, 1662, 1665, 1668, 1671, 1674, 1677, 1680, 1683, 1686, 1689, 1692, 1695, 1698, 1701, 1704, 1707, 1710, 1713, 1716, 1719, 1722, 1725, 1728, 1731, 1734, 1737, 1740, 1743, 1746, 1749, 1752, 1755, 1758, 1761, 1764, 1767, 1770, 1773, 1776, 1779, 1782, 1785, 1788, 1791, 1794, 1797, 1799, 1802, 1805, 1808, 1811, 1814, 1817, 1820, 1823, 1826, 1829, 1832, 1835, 1838, 1841, 1844, 1847, 1850, 1853, 1856, 1859, 1862, 1865, 1868, 1871, 1874, 1877, 1880, 1883, 1886, 1889, 1892, 1895, 1898, 1901, 1904, 1907, 1910, 1913, 1916, 1919, 1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937, 1940, 1943, 1946, 1949, 1952, 1955, 1958, 1961, 1964, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020, 2023, 2026, 2029, 2032, 2035, 2038, 2041, 2044, 2047, 2050, 2053, 2056, 2059, 2062, 2065, 2068, 2071, 2074, 2077, 2080, 2083, 2086, 2089, 2092, 2095, 2098, 2101, 2104, 2107, 2110, 2113, 2116, 2119, 2122, 2125, 2128, 2131, 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2629, 2632, 2635, 2638, 2641, 2644, 2647, 2650, 2653, 2656, 2659, 2662, 2665, 2668, 2671, 2674, 2677, 2680, 2683, 2686, 2689, 2692, 2695, 2698, 2701, 2704, 2707, 2710, 2713, 2716, 2719, 2722, 2725, 2728, 2731, 2734, 2737, 2740, 2743, 2746, 2749, 2752, 2755, 2758, 2761, 2764, 2767, 2770, 2773, 2776, 2779, 2782, 2785, 2788, 2791, 2794, 2797, 2799, 2802, 2805, 2808, 2811, 2814, 2817, 2820, 2823, 2826, 2829, 2832, 2835, 2838, 2841, 2844, 2847, 2850, 2853, 2856, 2859, 2862, 2865, 2868, 2871, 2874, 2877, 2880, 2883, 2886, 2889, 2892, 2895, 2898, 2901, 2904, 2907, 2910, 2913, 2916, 2919, 2922, 2925, 2928, 2931, 2934, 2937, 2940, 2943, 2946, 2949, 2952, 2955, 2958, 2961, 2964, 2967, 2970, 2973, 2976, 2979, 2982, 2985, 2988, 2991, 2994, 2997, 2999, 3002, 3005, 3008, 3011, 3014, 3017, 3020, 3023, 3026, 3029, 3032, 3035, 3038, 3041, 3044, 3047, 3050, 3053, 3056, 3059, 3062, 3065, 3068, 3071, 3074, 3077, 3080, 3083, 3086, 3089, 3092, 3095, 3098, 3101, 3104, 3107, 3110, 3113, 3116, 3119, 3122, 3125, 3128, 3131, 3134, 3137, 3140, 3143, 3146, 3149, 3152, 3155, 3158, 3161, 3164, 3167, 3170, 3173, 3176, 3179, 3182, 3185, 3188, 3191, 3194, 3197, 3199, 3202, 3205, 3208, 3211, 3214, 3217, 3220, 3223, 3226, 3229, 3232, 3235, 3238, 3241, 3244, 3247, 3250, 3253, 3256, 3259, 3262, 3265, 3268, 3271, 3274, 3277, 3280, 3283, 3286, 3289, 3292, 3295, 3298, 3301, 3304, 3307, 3310, 3313, 3316, 3319, 3322, 3325, 3328, 3331, 3334, 3337, 3340, 3343, 3346, 3349, 3352, 3355, 3358, 3361, 3364, 3367, 3370, 3373, 3376, 3379, 3382, 3385, 3388, 3391, 3394, 3397, 3399, 3402, 3405, 3408, 3411, 3414, 3417, 3420, 3423, 3426, 3429, 3432, 3435, 3438, 3441, 3444, 3447, 3450, 3453, 3456, 3459, 3462, 3465, 3468, 3471, 3474, 3477, 3480, 3483, 3486, 3489, 3492, 3495, 3498, 3501, 3504, 3507, 3510, 3513, 3516, 3519, 3522, 3525, 3528, 3531, 3534, 3537, 3540, 3543, 3546, 3549, 3552, 3555, 3558, 3561, 3564, 3567, 3570, 3573, 3576, 3579, 3582, 3585, 3588, 3591, 3594, 3597, 3599, 3602, 3605, 3608, 3611, 3614, 3617, 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5107, 5110, 5113, 5116, 5119, 5122, 5125, 5128, 5131, 5134, 5137, 5140, 5143, 5146, 5149, 5152, 5155, 5158, 5161, 5164, 5167, 5170, 5173, 5176, 5179, 5182, 5185, 5188, 5191, 5194, 5197, 5199, 5202, 5205, 5208, 5211, 5214, 5217, 5220, 5223, 5226, 5229, 5232, 5235, 5238, 5241, 5244, 5247, 5250, 5253, 5256, 5259, 5262, 5265, 5268, 5271, 5274, 5277, 5280, 5283, 5286, 5289, 5292, 5295, 5298, 5301, 5304, 5307, 5310, 5313, 5316, 5319, 5322, 5325, 5328, 5331, 5334, 5337, 5340, 5343, 5346, 5349, 5352, 5355, 5358, 5361, 5364, 5367, 5370, 5373, 5376, 5379, 5382, 5385, 5388, 5391, 5394, 5397, 5399, 5402, 5405, 5408, 5411, 5414, 5417, 5420, 5423, 5426, 5429, 5432, 5435, 5438, 5441, 5444, 5447, 5450, 5453, 5456, 5459, 5462, 5465, 5468, 5471, 5474, 5477, 5480, 5483, 5486, 5489, 5492, 5495, 5498, 5501, 5504, 5507, 5510, 5513, 5516, 5519, 5522, 5525, 5528, 5531, 5534, 5537, 5540, 5543, 5546, 5549, 5552, 5555, 5558, 5561, 5564, 5567, 5570, 5573, 5576, 5579, 5582, 5585, 5588, 5591, 5594, 5597, 5599, 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6098, 6101, 6104, 6107, 6110, 6113, 6116, 6119, 6122, 6125, 6128, 6131, 6134, 6137, 6140, 6143, 6146, 6149, 6152, 6155, 6158, 6161, 6164, 6167, 6170, 6173, 6176, 6179, 6182, 6185, 6188, 6191, 6194, 6197, 6199, 6202, 6205, 6208, 6211, 6214, 6217, 6220, 6223, 6226, 6229, 6232, 6235, 6238, 6241, 6244, 6247, 6250, 6253, 6256, 6259, 6262, 6265, 6268, 6271, 6274, 6277, 6280, 6283, 6286, 6289, 6292, 6295, 6298, 6301, 6304, 6307, 6310, 6313, 631

NEWS FROM PENARTH AND DISTRICT RAMBLERS

A wishing well, a pudding stone – and a Folly Tower!

RECENTLY, on a rather overcast morning Jeff, Ann, Terry and Marion joined William for the journey up to Goyt Wharf, a 200-year-old Industrial Heritage site situated on the Brecon and Monmouth canal between Pontypool and Abergavenny.

After strolling through fields towards Pentre Hill wood, the group turned south and passed cottages at Pen-y-stair, before walking beside a stream on the lower wooded slopes of Garn-wen.

They paused at the Holy Well or Ffynnon Angerion, where the spring comes out of a square stone structure which has a bell attached.

It was described as a medieval wishing well by Thomas Thomas of Cardiff who visited it in 1890 when pins, pencil stubs and buttons were found, having been tossed in apparently for luck.

They climbed up to the summit of Mynydd Garn-wen, standing at 425 metres. The

rocks are quartz conglomerate, hard white pieces of rock found in what is commonly called pudding stone, shown clearly in the English translation – mountain of white rock.

They then joined a track just beneath the ridgeway before descending, to skirt Pontypool Golf Club which apparently is the second highest golf course in Wales, beaten only by Nant-y-Glo, near Brynmawr.

Another climb led them to the famous landmark of Folly Tower, built around 1770 by John Hanbury, a local ironmaster who owned Pontypool Park. It is said that no less than seven counties can be seen from the top.

The group descended and headed off towards Lambbrook Farm where the views towards Llandegfedd reservoir and the Llancayo windmill were admired, before returning through Coed Howell to the start.

On February 4, meet at 9am at Cogan for a nine-mile hard walk at Craig y Nos, taking in a crashed aircraft site and a waterfall; contact Barrie on 029 2053 0753.

On February 5, meet at 10am at Cogan for a five-mile easy stroll around Cardiff Bay; contact Pam on 029 2021 9102.

Membership advice can be obtained from Pam on 029 2021 9102.

JOY STRANGWARD

Penarth Computer Club Open Office vs MS Office

IF IT sounds too good to be true, it probably is. This piece of advice stands us in good stead when considering buying something. It prevents us from falling for bargain that turns out not to be one.

It applies to buying software and enables us to avoid pirated or illegal copies from someone after your money.

But what if it is free?

There are people who feel that the big software houses shouldn't be charging high prices for their products. They have written similar software that does the same job and simply give it away as a matter of principle. No licence, no restrictions as to use, and you can give copies away to your friends.

Proprietary suites of Office Software can cost hundreds of pounds and are powerful enough to do just about any job; from a note to a novel, a list to a database or a picture to a presentation slide show with bells

and whistles.

Open Office (free to download) claims it can do it all as well. We recently looked at both suites to see if that is true.

Mike F gave a run-through of what he does with Open Office, and although there were slight differences in the way things worked, everything could be done in a way not unfamiliar to Windows Office users. Mike reminded us that he uses a mere 10 per cent of the software's capability – most of that being the same used by everyone, plus a few bits in odd corners of the programme that others might not use (that usage pattern is quite normal). The entire membership of the club probably uses much less than half of what is available.)

Mike J uses Microsoft Office 2007 and ran through a similar set of tasks. The screen layout is a little different from earlier versions (which Open Office resembles); the latest ribbon layout gives a new way of accessing the menus. Even so,

the user operations are broadly similar. Mike points out that he will continue with Microsoft Office because he is used to it.

The free suite is capable of reading and saving formats to suit other proprietary software and this applies to spreadsheets, pictures presentations and databases as well, and to the extent that the suites were demonstrated for home use; the free software could do all that the expensive software could.

Businesses often need and prefer the comfort (and technical support) of proprietary software, but it would seem worthwhile for an individual to download and try Open Office before spending lots of money (Google Open Office is free download). Free software from sources we trust is listed on our website (penarthcomputerclub.co.uk).

The next meeting is on Tuesday, February 14 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth at 7.30pm. For more information telephone 029 20708439.

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and whistles.

Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries HAVE YOUR SAY

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: CARDIFF

Notice is given today that there will be a public hearing under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1985, as amended, into the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for Wales for Parliamentary constituency boundaries in Wales, which were published on 11 January 2011.

The hearing will be held by the Assistant Commissioners, Mr Gerard Elias QC, Mr Gersaint Walters QC and Mr Clive Lewis QC. It will open on:

Wednesday 22 February 2012 at 10.00am in the Presidents Lounge – Millennium Stadium, Westgate Street, Cardiff, CF10 1NB and close at 8.00pm and re-open on:

Thursday 23 February 2012 at 9.00am in the same venue and close at 5.00pm.

The public hearing is intended to provide an opportunity for people to make representations about any of the Commission's initial proposals and to present any counter-proposals. Unlike the local inquiries of the past, a public hearing under the new statutory scheme is not intended to focus to any significant degree on comments about any counter-proposals that may be put forward by others.

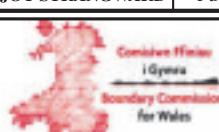
If you wish to make a representation at the above hearing, the Commission requests that you contact the Commission confirming the preferred date and time you wish to make your representation. The Commission will write to all of those who make a request with further information about the hearings and provide an allocated timeslot. If it is not possible to fit all requested representations at one particular venue, the nearest alternative venue will be offered.

Following receipt of the representations submitted during the initial consultation period, either in writing or at the public hearings, the Commission will publish these representations and a second consultation period will commence. Following this consultation period and receipt of the Assistant Commissioners' report, the Commission may revise their proposals. While the Commission will always invite written representations concerning any revised proposals they might publish, all interested parties should be aware that they may not be able to state their case at a further public hearing, as there is no provision of public hearings at any other stage of the 2013 Review.

The initial proposals and constituency maps are available on the Commission's website or at public locations across Wales.

For further information please contact: The Boundary Commission for Wales, Caradog House, 1 – 6 St Andrews Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BE.

Telephone 029 2039 6031
Fax 029 2039 5250
Email bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Web Site: www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk



Ffiniau Etholaeth Seneddol

DWEUD EICH DWEUD

HYSBYSIAD O WRANDAWIAD CYHOEDDUS: CAERDYDD

Hybysir diwy hyn heddlu y calli'r parandawiad cyhoeddus ei gyntaf o dan Ddeddf Etholaethau Seneddol 1985, fel y'i ddisgywyd, i gyngorion cychwynnol y Comisiwn Ffiniau i Gymru dros ffiniau etholaethau Seneddol yng Nghymru, a gyhoeddwyd ar 11 Ionawr 2011.

Caerf y parandawiad ei gyntaf pan y Comisiwn yw Cydnorthwyo, Mr Gerard Elias QC, Mr Gersaint Walters QC a Mr Clive Lewis QC. Bydd yn dechrau ar:

Dydd Mercher 22 Chwefror 2012 am 10.00am yn Llofa'r Llywodraeth - Stadiwm y Mileniwm, Westgate Street, Caerdydd, CF10 1NB ac yn dod i ben am 8.00pm ac yn all-ddechrau ar:

Dydd Iau 23 Chwefror 2012 am 9.00am yr un lleoliad ac yn dod i ben am 5.00pm.

Bwriadir i'r gwrandawiad cyhoeddus fod yn gyffle i boli roi sylwadau ar unrhyw un o gynnigion cychwynnol y Comisiwn ac i gyflwyno unrhyw wrthgynigion. Yn anffabrig i ymchwiliadau fod yn y gofennol, o dan y cynllun statudol newydd, ni fwriadir i wrandawiad cyhoeddus ganolbwyntio i unrhyw radidau helaeth ar sylwadau sy'n ymredu ag unrhyw wrthgynigion y gallai esall eu hawgrymu.

Os bydded i roi sylwadau yn y gwrandawiad uchod, gofynnai'r Comisiwn i chi gysylltu ag ef i gadarnhau dyddiad ariw amser ariw'n well gennach er mwyn rhoi eich sylwadau. Bydd y Comisiwn yn ymgynnull i bayb sy'n polo'n roi sylwadau yna rhagor a wybodaeth am y gwrandawiadau ac yn rhoi amser amcangyfriddiol i chi. Os na fydd modd i bayb sydd wedi gofynn am roi sylwadau eraill hynny mewn un lleoliad penodol, cymrigh i leoliad agos arall i chi.

Ar ôl i'r holl sylwadau a gylwyni'r yn ystod y cyffordd ymgyngithor cychwynnol ddedd i law, nall i'n ysgrifenedig neu yn y gwrandawiadau cyhoeddus, bytt y Comisiwn i'n cyhoeddusr sylwadau hyn a bydd all gyffordd ymgyngithor i deulu. Ar ôl i cyffordd ymgyngithor hyn ac ar ôl i adroddiad y Comisiwn yw Cydnorthwyo. Dod i law, nall i'n bosil y bydd y Comisiwn yn ddiwigo i'r gynnigion. Er y bydd y Comisiwn bob amser yn gwahodd sylwadau yna rhagor a wybodaeth am y gwrandawiadau ac yn rhoi amser amcangyfriddiol i chi. Os na fydd modd i bayb sydd wedi gofynn am roi sylwadau eraill hynny mewn un lleoliad penodol, cymrigh i leoliad agos arall i chi.

Mae'r cynnigion cychwynnol a misiau etholaethol ar gael ar weler y Comisiwn neu mewn lleoliadau cyhoeddus ledled Cymru.

Am ragor o wybodaeth, cysylltwch â'r Comisiwn Ffiniau i Gymru, Ty Caradog, 1 – 6 Pies Sant Andrews, Caerdydd, CF10 3BE.

Plaen 029 2039 6031
Places 029 2039 5250
E-bost comfin.cymru@cymin.gsi.gov.uk
Gwefan www.comfin-cymru.gov.uk

Council's strategic plan set to go out to public consultation

LDP draft available this month

THE official plan that will govern how land is used in the Vale over the next 15 years will be available for public comment from February 20.

The Vale Council has prepared its Deposit (draft) Local Development Plan (LDP), which, once adopted, will govern how land within the Vale is used between 2011 and 2026.

Llanwit Major Town Hall (Wednesday, February 29, 2pm – 7pm and Saturday, March 24, 10am – 1pm).

The LDP contains various local planning policies and makes provision for a number of land uses, including housing, employment, retail, recreation, transport, tourism, minerals, waste, and community uses.

A six-week public consultation on the Deposit LDP will take place from Monday, February 20 to Monday, April 2.

During the consultation period the Deposit LDP, together with supporting documents, can be viewed at the council's main offices and libraries or on the council's website.

Public exhibitions

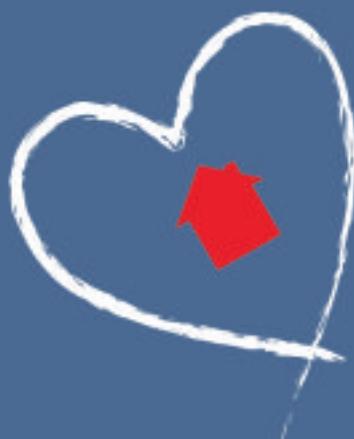
will be held at: West House, Penarth (Saturday, March 3, 10am – 1pm and Wednesday, March 14, 2pm – 7pm). Cowbridge Town Hall, (Saturday, March 10, 10am – 1pm and Tuesday, March 20, 2pm – 7pm).

"I would like to thank all those who have engaged in the process to date and look forward to receiving your views on what is an important strategic document."

Representations can be made during the consultation period using an online comment form, which can be found at www.vale-of-glamorgan.gov.uk/lldp. Paper forms can be obtained from Vale libraries and main council offices.

The closing date for comments on the plan is Monday, April 2, 5pm. The council will not consider representations submitted after this time.

For more information, contact the LDP team on 01446 700111 or e-mail LDP@vale-of-glamorgan.gov.uk.



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3 Double Bedrooms, Many Period Features Rear Drive - Rural Spot
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RHOOSE



Nurston Close, Rhoose
3 Bedrooms Beautifully refurbished
No onward chain
£229,950

BARRY



Porthkerry Road, Barry
7 Bedrooms (6 doubles)
4/5 Reception Rooms
Generous Gardens
£290,000

RHOOSE



Picton Road, Rhoose
3 Bedroom Semi Large Plot Drive, Garage
£152,950

BARRY



Churchfields, Barry
4/5 Bedrooms Granny Possibilities Enclosed Garden
£217,000

GILESTON



Ivy Cottage, Gileston
2 Double Bedrooms In the Very Best Order Idyllic Location
£285,000

LLANTWIT MAJOR



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3 Bedrooms No Onward Chain Low Maintenance garden
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HANDY TIP OF THE WEEK!

Don't have too many people present. Potential buyers feel like intruders. Try and leave your estate agent with a key.

We simply  selling property!

Bridgend Town Council's £1,000 cash boost for the youth cafe



Bridgend Town Mayor Clare Lewis presents a cheque for £1,000 to Joan Rayment, trustee of Christian Youth Outreach, watched by staff and customers at Solid Rock

CHILLING out with friends at a youth cafe could soon be a hi-tech experience, thanks to a cash boost from Bridgend Town Council.

Christian Youth Outreach, which runs Solid Rock Youth Centre in Nolton Street, was presented with a cheque for £1,000 during a visit by Bridgend Town Mayor, Clare Lewis. The centre is planning an upgrade of IT facilities.

Coun Lewis chatted with staff and customers and even tried her hand at pool as she toured the facilities, run by volunteers from churches including Hope Baptist and Litchard Mission.

On weekdays, the busy cafe serves lunchtime drinks and snacks to school and college students, as well as NEETS – young people not in education, employment or training.

There are evening sessions three times a week, with up to 40 young people playing pool, darts and Wii. This Friday (February 10) sees the second monthly free club night with music ranging from rock and pop to dubstep and drum'n'bass.

A computer room is available upstairs for those wanting to type up school or college work, compile a CV or just surf the net, alongside a chill-out room and an information point with leaflets on subjects as diverse as

pregnancy and drugs. A garden area will be ready for summer.

Project manager Matt Smith told Coun Lewis the centre provides more than just coffee and chat.

"This place is a stepping stone for young people," he said.

"Many are having problems at home or in school, but we are friendly faces and we share what is going on in their lives. It's a good way to offer support."

An annual weekend of community action involving beach cleaning, litter picking and garden clearing has inspired a weekly project. "It was such fun that people wanted to do it more often," said Mr Smith.

"We currently have six young people who meet here on Friday afternoons and we take them to work on a project.

"Last year, it was the garden of an elderly person in Cefn Cribwr, and we posted the before and after pictures on Facebook. We also paint or move furniture for elderly or disabled people."

Coun Lewis said: "I was impressed by the warm, friendly atmosphere at the centre. It's not just a place to meet – it can help young people gain vital people skills and practical experience for their CVs. Bridgend Town Council is delighted to support this project."

Inter Squadron sports success for Kenfig Air Cadets

ON Sunday, January 22 seven cadets from Kenfig Hill Squadron took part in Inter Squadron Sports with the hope of being selected to represent No.3 Welsh Wing ATC at RAF Cosford.

Cdt Cpl J Aston, Cdt J Norris and Cdt J Townsend took part in Rugby and Cdt J Norris has been chosen to represent Wing.

Not to be out done by the girls, Cdt J Ashton, Cdt E Cooks, Cdt S Muckall, Cdt O Norris and Cdt L Peckham played netball, and Cdt Cooks, Cdt Aston, Cdt O Norris were picked to represent Wing with Cdt L Peckham being a reserve. Although not at the event, Cdt H Maine was also mentioned as part of the Wing team.

Having played netball, the girls then entered into the girls five-a-side soccer. They played extremely well and achieved second place as a team and Cdt E Cooks and Cdt O Norris were chosen to represent Wing team to play at Cosford on February 5. Due to

weather conditions this was postponed until further notice.

Parents often help out with transport and this event was no different with Mr Ian Aston and Mrs Claire Norris helping transport cadets to and from the venue.

LINDSAY THOMAS,
Secretary Civilian Committee

THANKS to all who supported the evening at Nolton Church Hall on January 31, to raise money for the first Emmaus community in Wales.

The Belladonna vocal ensemble and their director Geoff Howells chose a wide range of enjoyable music and were given a warm reception.

The audience also responded very warmly to the companions from the Emmaus Gloucester community, who had come to support the Welsh group and to tell people about what a differ-

PENCOED RUGBY CLUB'S WRU RECRUITMENT DAY

THE Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) held a recruitment day at Pencoed RFC on January 29 where WRU Regional Community Manager, Ben Rose, was on hand – as part of their drive to recruit women's rugby players from around Wales.

Elsewhere recently, the Baby Phoenix squad played Gilfach Goch away. They were sadly beaten, but a good effort was put in from all the girls in a very cold, wet Gilfach.

New players are always welcome. For information telephone: 01656860152.



ABOVE:
WRU Regional
Community Manager
Ben Rose, Phoenix
players Amy Stevens
and Lauren Halse,
chairman Terry Rees
and sponsorship secre-
tary Wil Jones.

Pics courtesy of
Julie Hancock.

LEFT and RIGHT:
The Baby Phoenix
team in action against
Gilfach Goch.



Moves to make monument junction safer for Pencoed



ABOVE:
Coun Phil White, BCBC cabinet member for Communities,
with Sgt Jason McGill, representing South Wales Police.

WORK has begun on a £100k scheme to improve road safety around Pencoed's monument.

Bridgend County Borough (BCBC) wants to encourage drivers to reduce their speed as they approach the landmark junction.

Using funding from the Welsh Government's Regional Transport Consortia Road Safety Grant, the work will help address the history of accidents and collisions at the site.

Traffic-calming measures in the form of two new humped Puffin-type pedestrian crossings on the main Coychurch Road/Penybont Road are being introduced together with footway widening at certain points and bus stop improvements.

Once the new works are substantially complete, BCBC will resurface sections of Coychurch Road and Penybont Road.

At the request of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, a new yellow box junction will be introduced at Fairlawn Terrace to overcome the current situation where queuing vehicles occasionally block the junction and hold up right-turning fire tenders.

Coun Phil White, the cabinet member for communities, said: "This is a busy junction and BCBC is keen to make it as safe as possible as part of our commitment to the continued regeneration of Pencoed."

"These are sensible measures which will improve safety for drivers and pedestrians and also make it easier for the emergency services to respond. I'm sure the community will welcome these improvements, and we thank them for their patience while these essential works are undertaken."

Bridgend Local Policing Inspector Paul Tinkler added: "Local police welcome the improvements. We continue to work closely with BCBC and other partner agencies to keep the communities and roads of Bridgend safe."

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Harmony and hope for homeless people

ence Emmaus had made for them.

Richard Pendlebury, a director of the Bristol Emmaus community, sang two of his own songs and interviewed Staci and Chris, two of the companions living and working in Gloucester Emmaus now.

Staci, who was born in Bridgend, was looking forward to managing a new clothes store in Gloucester soon and said that Emmaus had helped her turn her life around.

Chris has been fundraising for others as well as working, and said that without Emmaus he might be "dead or

in prison". We were all delighted to see them take pride in what they had achieved and with hope for the future.

John Noble, chair of Emmaus UK, emphasised the difference that the chance given by Emmaus can make to people's lives from his own experience with other communities.

Find out more by coming to an evening with Terry Waite at Bryngarw House on March 29 at 7.30pm. Free admission.

RUTH O'NEILL

PENYBONT SURF AND LIVE SAVING CLUB CELEBRATES A VERY SUCCESSFUL 2011



LEFT: Members of the nippers club.

PENYBONT Surf Life Saving Club has been celebrating a successful 2011, which culminated in a number of competition wins, as well as being involved in environmental projects along the coastline – and arranging for a new slipway to be built at Ogmore Beach.

The club also, of course, carried out numerous rescues over the summer.

Based at Ogmore-by-Sea, the club has nearly 300 members from around Bridgend and the Vale, aged between seven and 10 years old. It has five main sections: nippers, juniors, seniors, masters and the inshore rescue boat team.

Nippers are between seven and 12 years old and they learn the basic skills and techniques. At 12 years old they join the junior section where they train and learn more complex rescue skills.

The senior and masters sections are adult members who patrol the beach as volunteers through the summer. Finally, the inshore rescue boat team provide safety cover for beach users who can get into trouble from the ever-present strong Ogmore sea currents.

All age groups were successful in inter-club and national competitions, and nippers receiving life saving awards and competing for their club last year included: Chloe Allen, Kiah Armstrong, Abigail Carson, Tanya Chaliserry, Amy Collins, Ellie Davies, Holly Davies, Meghanne Davies, Emily Dawkins, Caitlin Delaney, Isobel Dodd, Katie Evans, Kadi Evans, Lauren Evans, Holly Evans, Georgia Francis, Catherine Harrison, Kate Harry, Jane Harry, Rose Harry, Emily Hart, Annabel Hegarty, Katie Hill, Poppy Jenkins, Ellie Jenkins, Katie John, Seren John, Molly Johns, Emily Johns, Bethan Jones, Aaliyah Knill, Iola-Belle Lake, Katie Lewis, Emelia Lewis, Molly McAndrew, Stephanie Mills, Nia Morgan, Aimee Morris, Lowri Morrison, Hollie Mullan, Emily Munro-Daw, Rebecca Ogilvie, Georgia Phillips, Rosie Pope, Sophie Price, Isobel Randall, Lucy Rathrey, Molly Raybould, Molly Ridge, Phoebe Roach, Carys Ross, Carys Sheard, Olivia Stadden, Daya Standing, Carys Taylor, Jade Thomas, Hannah Thomas, Lucy Thomas, Megan Thomas, Amy Thomas, Livvy Westwood, Louisa White, Emily Williams, Anya Davies, Jack Evans, Alex Fox, Tim

Williams, Lilli Williams, Shauna Williams, Olivia Woodward, Thomas Anthony, Morgan Bennett, Morgan Boobyer, Rhys Bradshaw, Joseph Bruck, Joseph Bryant, Jack Carson, Morgan Clemett, George Clemett, Aaron Davies, Ioan Davies, William Davies, Morgan Evans, Ioan Evans, Iwan Gibbs, Luca Govani, Luke Gregory, James Harrison, Ieuau Hill, Matthew Hobby, Iestyn James, Sion Jansen, Taylor Jeans, William Jenkins, Gwilym John, Iestyn John, Dylan Kembery, Dewi Lake, Owain Lewis, Thomas Lewis, Isaac Lewis, Jacob Lewis, Steffan Lewis, Kai Lewis, Tomas Ludlow, Jac Macarthur, Emry Morris, Bradley Newman, Ciaran Oliver, Oliver Patterson, Angus Patterson, William Pearce, Osian Phinnemore, Iestyn Pope, Joseph Price, Oliver Rathkey, Dafydd Rees, Iestyn Rees, Morgan Rees, William Rees, Evan Rees, Samuel Rees, Harry Ridge, Oliver Randall, George Robinson, Carl Robinson, Scott Ryall, Samuel Stead, Matthew Saunders, Adam Saunders, Ethan Slade, Shalain Standing, Aaron Thomas, Thomas Wards, Taylor Waters, Isaac Watkins, William Watkins, Joseph Watts, George Webber, Lewys Williams, Dylan Wisdom, Dafydd Woods, Tom Wright, and Luke Yates.

Junior coach Mark Evans said: "The junior section were superb in 2011. They worked hard in patrolling Ogmore beach as trainee lifeguards, and their efforts paid off when we won the gold in the Wales Junior Lifeguards competition."

Many junior members also achieved life saving awards and competition medals. These included:

Bronwyn Apsee, Ellie Baldwin, Cerys Bradshaw, Meghan Bryant, Sophia Campian, Ellie Crompton, Katie Dalton, Eleri Davies, Sorcha Davies, Mair Davies, Georgia Dunlop, Megan Elsbury, Leah Harris, Emma Hobby, Maisie Isaac, Zoe James, Emily Kembery, Antalia Landero, Hannah Lewis, Bethany Morris, Ellie Morrison, Aimee Mullan, Alana Mullan, Rebecca Murray, Bethan Parker, Taylor Robinson, Ellie Sheard, Paige Summers, Megan Summers, Nia Thomas, Lydia Thomas, Samantha Tiernan, Mollie Watkins, Chlo Webb, Francesca White, Shauna Williams, Libby Wright, Anna Wynne, Scott Callicott, Ethan Candlish-Nott, Lewis Carson, Lewis Crompton, Jacob David, Ieuau Davies, Liam Davies, Ruairi Davies, Jack Evans, Alex Fox, Tim

The old slipway at Ogmore was removed two years ago on health and safety grounds. This has meant difficult beach access for Ogmore residents, tourists and club members.

The slip being removed also meant rescues were dangerous across the rocks onto the fore-shore.

The club worked closely with Dunraven Estates and Vale Council to find a solution for the access problem.

Work on the new slipway is planned to start in March and should be finished by the end of April.

The club has also cleaned up at the beach. Keep Wales Tidy officer, Ian Harvey, explained: "Keep Wales Tidy and Penybont lifeguards started a programme of beach clean projects in 2011. More than 60 members came to lend a hand and collected more than two tonnes of rubbish."

More clean-up projects between KWT and Penybont Lifeguards are planned for next year.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Ian Harvey at Keep Wales Tidy on 02920 726994.

NW



ABOVE: Members who earned selection for the Welsh squad show off their caps.



ABOVE AND LEFT: Members of the nippier and junior teams, and Co-op managers Gary Chappell and Rob Cook, after the award of the £2,000 grant towards the new slipway.

MP visits Cefn Glas playgroup after Christmas break-in shock

BRIDGEND MP Madeline Moon recently met with the trustees of Westward Playgroup, Cefn Glas, Mr Huw Morris and Ms Dawn Pound, to hand over cheques to the charity, to help out after their break in.

Ms Moon said: "I heard of the distressing news of the break in at the Westward Community Centre, when the staff of the playgroup had their Christmas savings and pay stolen."

"Mr Morris said that since July last year,

"It was heartbreaking to hear of the crime, where gates and doors where smashed and cupboards ransacked.

"Mr Morris said that since July last year,

"During our meeting,

substantial renovation work had been carried out at the centre and they were all completely devastated by this cruel act."

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Mr Morris explained that the community had been fantastic and had rallied round, as well as small local businesses."

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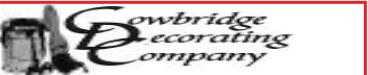
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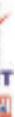
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SOUTHERNDOWN LIFE SAVING CLUB STAGES A NIGHT OF CELEBRATIONS

THESE pictures were taken at Southerndown Surf Life Saving Club's presentation evening in Bridgend Recreation Centre, which was well supported by coaches, pupils and parents.

Many awards were presented, including the following: Super nipper award; best newcomer nipper, junior, senior; nipper, junior, senior captains; nipper, junior, senior competitor of the year.

For more details of the Southerndown Surf Life Saving Club, contact <http://southerndownslsc.brick.co.uk/>



ABOVE:

The 'outstanding' nipper award went to Callum Howell, and he was presented with his trophy by the nipper captain, Seren Allin.



ABOVE:
The club's
competitors with
their awards.



RIGHT:
The club members
who qualified for
their NARS beach
lifeguard certificate.

LEFT:
Nipper captain Mali
Howell, junior captain
Dafydd Fardy,
and senior captain
Luke Aspinall.



ABOVE: The most improved nipper award went to Florence Puddicombe.



Ty Hafan boost

WITH many charities feeling the effect of the tough economic climate in terms of the value of donations, Ty Hafan hospice had a £38,000 boost to its fundraising from Cabot Carbon in Sully.

Over the last year, many of its employees helped with fundraising, helping with activities such as gardening at the hospice. They asked their corporate-giving foundation based in the USA to consider giving Ty Hafan a grant.

A spokesperson said: "Due to the wonderful work Ty Hafan does and because of how strongly the local Cabot site supports the charity, the foundation granted the request.

"They were very moved by the stories about the hospice and the services it provides. The donation is the biggest grant awarded by Cabot (outside of national disaster donations)."

Louisa's off to South Africa!

C O W B R I D G E cricket club's Louisa Knowles is off on the trip of a lifetime, having been selected for the Welsh under-15s and under-17s girls' cricket development squad for their tour to Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa later this month.

The year-9 pupil at Howell's School, Cardiff, became interested in cricket when Welsh cricket coaches visited local primary schools in Cardiff and the Vale in 2007.

The development of the new SWALEC stadium in Sophia Gardens led to a new fund being created to encourage girls' cricket in Wales.

Louisa said: "I started training with the Glamorgan Girls' Academy, played for Cardiff and the Vale, and a few months later joined Cowbridge Cricket Club."

"I have attended three Malvern Cricket festivals, where the Welsh teams and development squads play against teams from all over the UK and Ireland.

"I am very excited about the visit to South Africa, which will be a great and memorable experience."



ABOVE:
Louisa Knowles
with her Welsh
cricket cap.

awarded my Welsh cap this autumn.



ABOVE:

Seren Allin, the competitor of the year, with club captain Rebecca Melbourne Thomas.

Convincing win for under-12s

THE Cowbridge under-12s produced an impressive display to secure victory over CRIC.

The forwards started strongly, securing a steady stream of quality ball for the backs.

It did not take long for the first try to come thanks to centre Max Cunningham, who powered his way over the line.

Although the CRIC forwards competed well, as the game continued, so did the scores; with the speedy Harrison Ashby getting two tries, one of which was a solo effort from within his own half.

Further tries came from Evan Williams and Rhys Bradshaw, with one converted by Williams, and this took the half-time score to 27-0.

The second half opened with a more determined CRIC achieving some effective counter-rucking. Their efforts were rewarded with a good forward drive resulting in a try.

The half was more evenly contested, with the opposition putting in some fine tackles.

It was the Cowbridge forwards, however, who

COWBRIDGE U12s	37
CRIC	5

had the final say with the ball, finding the hands of second row Cameron Roy on the 22m line. He made good ground and was well supported by Angus James, who drew defenders before passing to Jac Roberts. He was in turn tackled into touch a metre from the line.

The resulting defensive line-out saw the Cowbridge forwards pressurising the CRIC half-backs, and prop Dan Marshall ripped the ball from an opponent to score. A further, well worked try by Morgan Gore brought the game to a close at 37-5.

A second, 20-minute game allowed the substitutes to have game time against CRIC. Cowbridge again secured a victory with a 14-0 margin with tries by Luc Beatey and Harrison Ashby, plus conversions by Bradshaw and Gore.

GD

Jaguar XF mixes old and new in sophisticated blend

MY FAMILY part of the marathon six-hour Djokovic and Nadal tennis match on the television.

"So what?" you might say. Ah, but we were parked in a flash Jaguar XF three-litre diesel at the time.

This was only possible, I admit, after my adorable 11-month old daughter Harriett – perhaps a future Vicki Butler-Henderson – helped her dense father operate the touchscreen TV in the centre of the dash.

After she got bored and turned her hand to steering and grabbing the leather-stitched dashboard, my wife Caroline and I had a small chance of willing Nadal to win before Harriett got bored.

Sadly, our chanting didn't help. You can see why the XF is so popular among chauffeurs. For starters, the interior is packed with luxuries such as electrically operated heated and cooled front seats.

Then the Freeview TV, with remarkable reception incidentally, provides hours of entertainment for the driver as he keeps the engine running for those VIP passengers. It's no surprise that there are 18 Jaguars, including a three-litre XF diesel in the Ministerial Car Pool.

Apparently Ministers have turned their backs

on Japanese cars and are now demanding Birmingham-built Jags instead. Very patriotic chaps.

Interestingly, the Government has revealed that every new ministerial car bought since the 2010 general election has been a Jaguar manufactured at Castle Bromwich.

Television isn't the only reason to savour the XF, though. The suave and sophisticated luxury limousine can reach 60mph from standstill in just 5.9 seconds, and has a top speed of 155mph (limited), all smoothly delivered through an eight-speed auto.

It is also equipped with paddle shifts for those who enjoy the experience of a manual.

Diesel technology has certainly improved. Last week, I drove the brash Mitsubishi Lancer Evo with its permanent sense of urgency.

In comparison, the gentlemanly Jag is a much more refined and debonair character that still delivers very similar performance (the XF is just under a second slower in the 0 to 60 stakes and yet delivers 44mpg compared to 18 to 23 in the Evo).

Where the Evo, more like a rough and ready Cockney geezer, had a particularly hard ride, the aristocratic cat is much smoother. And there's not an imposing roar from the exhaust either, more a slight purr. Soundproofing is exemplary.

The test took place during some pretty severe cold spells and the quick clear windscreens are effective.

As is often the way these days, the standard ignition has been replaced with a simple start/stop button on the centre console. Initially a little noise can be heard from the engine, but overall it is the quietest diesel I have had the privilege of driving.

When the engine starts the air vents automatically lift and open, making the vehicle feel very futuristic.

Additionally, a sophisticated dial that replaces the traditional gearstick rises from the console. It is simply a matter of selecting your chosen mode and then depressing the hand-brake switch to commence your journey.

Although it's hard to criticise the XF there are a few irritations. Look at the steering wheel and the Jaguar image seems slightly comical and out of character, in my opinion.

The traditional leaping Jaguar, which appears on the touch-screen and the boot, would be far more appropriate I feel.

When reversing, the high-pitched warning sound emitted is a little harsh for comfort, although those hard of hearing might find it useful.

Fitted with cruise control, the XF also has a sophisticated vehicle sensor that generally keeps the XF at a safe



ABOVE: The Jaguar XF.

distance from the car in front. This technology, however, isn't infallible, requiring the driver to intervene when a vehicle pulls out in front, for instance.

Windscreen washers don't usually interest me but on the Jag they have been mounted on the actual windscreen wipers – rather than the bonnet.

Externally this is a strikingly attractive car with its distinctive front grille and low front spoiler. The reasonably sized boot easily accommodated my daughter's pushchair.

Helpfully, when in the middle lane of the motorway, the power-folding wing mirrors incorporate a flashing two-car symbol that informs the driver when a car appears in their blind spot.

Music lovers are sure to appreciate the crystal clear 1,200W 17-speaker Bowers & Wilkins audio system. Tunes that you thought you knew well suddenly seem to gain additional instruments and greater clarity.

Parkers, the car experts, say: "Years of

criticism for being too 'traditional' and flagging sales prompted Jaguar to take a radical step when replacing the S-Type."

"The XF has hints of previous Jaguars in details of its design, but looks and feels every inch a modern, upmarket saloon. The interior is wonderfully stylish and despite actually containing more wood than any previous Jaguar, it's combined with aluminium to give it a contemporary appearance."

"It's amazingly comfortable too but also good to drive, with very little body roll and responsive steering."

It strikes me, though, that the driver and front passenger have all the luxury with the television and heated and cooled electrically operated front seats.

Jaguar XF diesel tested £49,950, Economy: 44mpg (combined), Top speed: 155mph (limited), Road tax: £269 for 12 months, Power: 275bhp.

The importance of proper car servicing!

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HAVING the car serviced is often seen as that dreaded task which may prove to cost an arm and a leg, or as one of our customers puts it, "will it mean I have to sell one kidney, or two?"

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Believe it or not, there is also a huge difference in how servicing is done at different garages. For example, it's astonishing how often an oil change is referred to as a service!

The quality of fluids and filters used makes an enormous difference too.

Let's think about it logically; is it not true that you always get what you pay for in life?

The same is true of fluids and filters.

If you put a bargain basement cheap quality oil filter in the car, it is going to degrade and dirty far quicker than a higher quality filter.

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While this sounds good, the truth of it is that if you use quality

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Therefore, if you've been quoted a bargain basement price, you can expect corners to be cut somewhere.

At Permovo, we always base our servicing on your vehicle manufacturer's recommendations, plus an additional checklist of our own to ensure that we can keep you informed of any potential problems arising with the vehicle.

Our servicing always includes a free main dealer level diagnostic code scan so that you see whether your car has any fault codes logged – and we even throw in a free air-con top up!

Also, if you've had your annual inspection with us, you will know whether you are likely to have to do any other maintenance throughout the next 12 months.

Bear in mind that a code scan at the main dealers tends to be upwards of £100 and an

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PICTURED: John and Cameron McAllister and Jack Jones with Alun Cairns MP

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VALE MP Alun Cairns joined three local schoolboys as they celebrated their successful campaign for rugby posts in their local park at Barry Island.

Mr Cairns met the youngsters at Maslin Park for a practice kicking session over the new posts.

The boys were John McAllister and Jack Jones, who attend Barry Comprehensive, and younger brother Cameron McAllister, who is a pupil at Barry Island Primary School.

The Vale MP contacted the council at the end of last year, to ask about their plans to regenerate and improve the sporting facilities at the park.

Mr Cairns said: "Credit must be given to the Vale Council for their prompt and positive response to the boys' campaign to improve the facilities at Maslin Park on the Island."

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GEM sport

Three-tries Wales make it three wins in a row against the Irish Old Guard and now set their sights on the Scots ...BUT LET'S NOT TALK OF A GRAND SLAM JUST YET!



ABOVE:
Giant wing, George North, who terrorised the Irish defence all afternoon and again confirmed his world class status.

BELOW: Jonathan Davies goes over for his second try, courtesy of North's sleight of hand.



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BACK PAGE COMMENT by Don John

WALES travelled to Dublin for their opening Six Nations rugby match on Sunday, knowing they were entering a bubbling cauldron, where the usual Celtic camaraderie had been temporarily suspended and 'revenge' was on everyone's lips in the streets of the Irish capital.

The proud men in green had been incensed at being denied victory in Cardiff during last year's championship by Mike Phillips' 'illegal' try, after the wrong ball was seemingly used at a quick line-out – for Wales to edge home by 19-13.

That was a bad enough blow to Irish pride, but worse was to follow just six months later in New Zealand, when Warren Gatland's fired-up young Welsh recruits ended their Rugby World Cup hopes, putting the Old Guard to the sword at the Battle of Wellington – and sending them home to the Emerald Isle on the back of a humiliating 22-10 quarter final defeat.

(Another opportunist try by bogey man Phillips merely served to rub salt in the wound)

Little wonder, then, that the Irish camp, who had let it be known beforehand that they 'knew how to beat Wales', believed they had a double score to settle and itched to reassess their dominance over upstart Celtic cousins from across the water in this year's Six Nations.

After all, prior to RWC 2011, they had won 10 times in 15 encounters, with Wales winning just five – including the Grand Slam years 2005, 2008. However, that stunning RWC result had moved Wales further ahead in the overall wins table, with 65 to Ireland's 47 – plus six matches drawn.

Indeed, apart from a 54-10 landslide win in Dublin in 2002, matches between the two have invariably been dramatic, nail-biting affairs, with no quarter expected, or given, and barely a handful of points separating them at close of play.

The big question was, could Wales again rise to the occasion and repeat that convincing RWC performance Down Under, in the hostile environment of a packed Dublin stadium?

Most pundits had predicted that the task would be beyond a team short of four of the first choice forwards who had spearheaded the World Cup heroics, and now facing battle-hardened veterans boosted by their regions' success in Europe, and roared on by a capacity home crowd.

Ominously, at the outset it seemed that Irish pre-match confidence was justified, as the Welsh defence was immediately put at full stretch, the intense pressure resulting in a penalty, which outside half Jonathan Sexton calmly slotted over for a three-point lead after just three minutes.

However, under Kiwi Gatland, this new generation of young Welsh players is fast developing a hard-edged physical and mental resilience which first surfaced during World Cup displays that won universal acclaim.

They promptly hit back and after former skipper Ryan Jones had a try controversially disallowed, Scarlets centre Jonathan Davies completed a top-drawer Welsh move, bursting over for the first of his two tries, thanks to a clever one-handed pass from regional team mate Rhys Priestland.

Back from injury and happily restored at outside half, Priestland hit the post with the



ABOVE: Jubilation, as Welsh players claim another touchdown.

conversion attempt and did so again five minutes later with a penalty!

Welsh supporters feared that these misses could prove critical, but were relieved when Sexton too missed with a penalty attempt – only to have their hopes jolted by a simple, converted try that gave Ireland a 10-5 lead at the change-over – this despite Wales having dominated territory and possession.

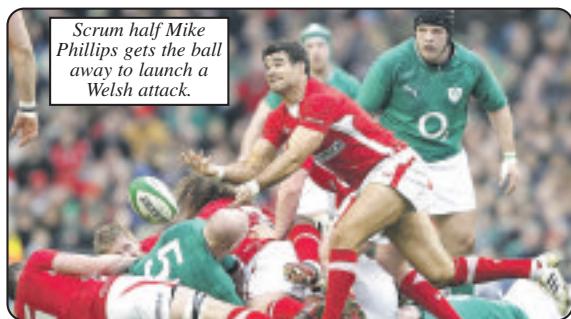
When Ireland struck again one minute into the second half with a Sexton penalty, and Priestland failed with his third attempted place kick when it was their opponents' turn to be penalised, many must have wondered if this was to be yet another case of 'so near yet so far' for Wales with the scoreboard now showing a 13-5 deficit.

A change of place kicker brought an immediate change of fortune when Leigh Halfpenny took over the duty and landed a successful penalty; following this up by converting Jonathan Davies' second try, following a break by the quite outstanding George North to give Wales a 15-13 lead, as they went into the final quarter.

The Welsh players had barely finished celebrating, however, when disaster struck and lock Bradley Davies was fortunate to receive only 10 minutes in the sin bin after dangerously upending an opponent yards in an off the ball incident.

Ireland regained a one-point lead with yet another Sexton penalty and seemed to have the game almost won when winger, Tommy Bowe, clinically finished off a move out wide – though the try was unconverted – to make the score 21-15, with 10 minutes to go to full time.

The Irish then had another chance to put the issue beyond doubt, but failed with a penalty attempt – and it was now that the 14-man Welsh team showed their new-found mettle as



Scrum half Mike Phillips gets the ball away to launch a Welsh attack.

George North rampaged over the try line with three defenders desperately clinging on, to bring his team within one point at 21-20.

Halfpenny missed the conversion but made amends with one minute left on the clock, when Ireland's Stephen Ferris was sent to the sin bin for a 'tip' tackle and the Blues man sent his penalty kick straight and true between the posts for a heartening 23-21 victory (the third in a row against the Irish).

It suddenly opens up all sorts of possibilities for Wales, who can look forward to three home matches in their bid to top the championship.

Next up is Scotland, who after their 6-13 defeat to England in Saturday's dismal Calcutta Cup match at Murrayfield, surely will not view coming to Cardiff this weekend with optimism.

In contrast, despite the resurfacing of age-old problems with the line-out, Gatland can now prepare his charges with confidence for the next hurdle, as they strive to build Six Nations momentum – and maintain the long-term goal of consistency.

However, the New Zealander also knows that there is a pressing need to contain the euphoria in the wake of such a fine display, and temper media-led expectations with realism.

He knows it is a pressure his young charges could well do without. Above all, it is far too premature to talk of Grand Slams, with England (away) and favourites France yet to come.